MIRIAM of QUEEN'S

LILIAN VAUX MacKINNON

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MIRIAM OF QUEEN'S

LILIAN VAUX MacKINNON

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MIRIAM OF QUEEN'S

BY

LILIAN VAUX MacKINNON

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CHAPTER I: A CONTRACT CONFIRMED

"A contract of eternal bond of love
Confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands."
—*Twelfth Night,* Act V, Sc. 1.

Kingston, on a clear June evening. The quiet of grass and trees on shadowy, winding streets. Sashes of soft colours along the western sky, the still waters of the great lake. The calm of twilight and the flush of summer, making the old Limestone City, that sweet city with its dreaming spires, the haunt of peace.

The haunt of love as well. June is lovers' month. May belongs to housewives, October to harvesters, and December to little children. There is not a month but claims its votaries. June's very name recalls love's throbbing tone of tenderness, love's radiant eyes. The sunshine lends its ardour, the roses offer their sweetness, and all the months that went before step back in glad procession.

For every marriage that is made in Heaven there is a bonny bride. And it needed not the eye of a fond lover to discern the winsomeness of Elizabeth Danvers on that spotless summer evening. Tall, fresh and clear-eyed, her height revealed her mind's dimensions, her soul shone through her eyes. She had come out on the wide verandah of the doctor's home, and stood poised on the topmost step ready to give glad welcome. Crossing the street from the park two ladies were approaching—mother and daughter, at an easy guess.

"But you never, never should have walked, Aunt Laura!" Her full voice floated across the street most musically, the while she smiled, a warm, challenging smile.

A slight bow from her aunt, a wave of the hand from her cousin, and in another moment they were coming up the steps.

Elizabeth welcomed her visitors with impulsive embraces. Suffering herself to be clasped but for a moment, Mrs. Roderick Campbell withdrew from the soft arms, adjusting her hat which had gone awry. "And how is Elizabeth?" she asked with studied cheeriness.

Did she need to ask you that, Elizabeth? Were you not telling her in that embrace so patently unwelcome? But, "Oh, so well and happy, Aunt Laura!" the assurance came quickly, with a corroborating smile.

The keen glance, charged with amusement at the simplicity of her tastes, might have discomfited the bride-elect, had she not been turning toward her cousin. Pauline was looking curiously towards an open bay window, through which voices of two or three young men in pleasant chorus came sounding.

"Shall we go in then?" Elizabeth was beginning when a rustle of silk behind her and a quick exclamation from her mother suddenly recalled her remissness.

"Why, Laura! And Pauline! Come in! Come in! I'm so sorry you had to walk. And from the hotel! Owen was called out suddenly, but we were ordering a carriage. Are you fatigued?" ushering them in solicitously. "Now tell me, why would you persist in putting up at the hotel when I had room and to spare? And why would you keep my own brother Roderick from visiting me? He's coming on the midnight? I've a good mind to steal him from you, Laura Campbell!"

The tone might have sounded heated, but the glow in

those dark eyes belied that idea. And how those eyes would have flashed had Mrs. Roderick Campbell spoken in truth, "If I stay at the hotel it puts me under no obligation to return your hospitality." Instead she answered smoothly, "We have very comfortable rooms, my dear Ellen, and as for walking up, we enjoyed it. Your little park is so restful. There's the promise of a fine day for you to-morrow, Elizabeth."

But Elizabeth, divining her cousin's desires, was slipping her across the hall into the drawing-room.

"The other young people," Mrs. Danvers explained, smilingly, "why, I wonder where Miriam is. Elizabeth, does Miriam know that her mother is here? Where is she?"

"Down in the garden with Sedley. Do you want me to call her, Aunt Laura? Sedley reads poetry to her. He sets her to learning long passages at a time. They take possession of the library at nights and recite to each other."

"Miriam will be glad of help for her literature examinations, I am sure," Mrs. Roderick Campbell rejoined.

Elizabeth's laugh rippled out. "It's rather like supplementary reading, I should say."

"You'll simply have to leave Miriam with us, Laura. This few days' visit isn't enough." Into Mrs. Owen Danvers' voice had crept a plaintive note. "I'm losing my only girl, and you have two."

Her sister-in-law smiled enigmatically. "You're getting another son, Ellen. Isn't that the modern form of consolation? And a bookish sort like Sedley, too." She turned suddenly to listen. "That is not his voice now, is it? Mr. Rutherford's, I mean. It sounds familiar, though."

"And so it should be, my dear," Mrs. Danvers rejoined, rising and leading the way across the hall. "It

should be familiar, since it is your own nephew's—Fyfe Boulding, you know. He is to have a little part in to-morrow's ceremony, just a bit of distinction because of his connection." Here, catching a curious expression flitting across the other woman's face, she added, "Not that there is much distinction about the whole wedding—a very simple affair."

Had Mrs. Campbell generously corrected her with the words, "Except the bride," a new bond would have joined the two. But Mrs. Campbell was too greatly concerned with the trappings. A moment later her busy eyes found Fyfe in the far corner of the drawing-room, deep in conversation with Pauline.

"Ah, don't disturb them," Mrs. Danvers said. "Come and see all the gifts that my dear girl's friends have sent her." They moved up the broad stairway.

Much relieved, Pauline watched them go. With an air of tempting reserve she had begun her little fusilade of personalities. "You were singing as we came in, were you not? I saw you by the piano. You didn't know you were being watched."

"Didn't I? Why I saw you all the way across the park." Fyfe was responsive, very, to feminine wiles.

"The idea! Among all those trees!"

"Trees? What trees? I never saw any trees."

This wordy skirmishing was delicious, and Pauline roused herself to meet the challenge. Nothing pleased her better than these "quips and cranks and wanton wiles, nods and becks and wreathed smiles," even if Fyfe *were* a cousin!

They had reached a most interesting stage in repartee where lifted eyebrows, arch glances and tantalising silences played as important a part as mere words. Pauline, pink with exhilaration, was propounding the abstruse query, "How do you know that I know?" while

Fyfe bent his eyes darkly on her charms, when the glass door leading out to the verandah opened quickly and a girl slipped in, followed by a young man, his fingers between the leaves of a Temple "Shakespeare."

Fyfe drew up his languid length while Pauline crimsoned with vexation. What did that child mean by breaking into the conversation!

"Well, Miriam, where were you mooning?" she questioned, giving her young sister a perfunctory kiss. She bestowed the same favor upon Sedley but with much more effusion. Fyfe Boulding murmured that he wished *he* could find some long-lost relations. These near ones were too far.

"We were down in the garden," Miriam told her directly. "Where's Mother? Did Father come?"

"What do you think of a girl that's in love with Orlando?" Sedley questioned, with his radiant smile.

> "My pride fell with my fortunes,
> I'll ask him how he fares."

His laughter was infectious, so sincere was it, so fraught with pure merriment.

Pauline was divided between annoyance at the prominence given to Miriam and admiration of Sedley. She glanced from one to the other uncertainly.

"'Verbum sap'—Will you be my honey?" Fyfe Boulding drawled, at which Sedley laughed the more.

Pauline adroitly slipped in front of the two men, shutting off all view of the young sister who stood flushed and perturbed at one side.

"*Quod jam erat finis*—At last the preserves were all gone," Sedley contributed.

"How did you translate the other?" Pauline questioned, tilting up her face provocatively. It was an opportunity for Fyfe.

"Oh, that's easy! *Verbum*—the verb 'to be'; will you be—*sap*—sweetness, sugar-plum, honey? Will you be my honey?" he emphasised.

"Oh!" said Pauline, her long lashes sweeping her cheeks.

Miriam slipped out and made her way upstairs to where her mother, with Mrs. Danvers and Elizabeth, was viewing the wedding gifts.

"That's a very expensive dish, Ellen." Mrs. Campbell appraised it keenly, balancing a silver dish on the tips of her fingers. "My sister, Mrs. Boulding of Regina, has one very much the same pattern. You are arranging all the sterling silver together, are you not? Now I should advise putting this good dish in the centre. It will show to splendid advantage. And this little spoon—no" (examining it closely) "it's not solid—may I tuck it over somewhere on the side table?"

"Oh, Auntie, no! Please don't touch that," Elizabeth started forward. "It's got my name on the handle, 'Elizabeth,' do you see? It was given me by an old lady whom I dearly love. The person who sent the other is a patient of father's. That's all I seem to know about her. She's very wealthy but very weather-cocky. Won't you leave the spoon where I put it?"

"Why, certainly, Elizabeth. I do not wish to alter your arrangements. But if I were consulted I should group the presents according to value."

"Elizabeth arranges them according to personal bias," her mother laughed.

"Nevertheless, value counts," Mrs. Campbell contended, "especially when one cannot replace silverware easily. You won't find money elastic, my dear girl. A pedagogue's salary is not princely." She smiled intently on her niece.

Elizabeth smiled warmly in return. "I'm sure I'll make

a place for everything that people are good enough to give me, that is unless we go into two rooms."

A little laugh greeted this remark, as Miriam came in among them. "Two rooms wouldn't hold Tom's books," she said. "Why, here you are, Mother! Did you have a nice trip up?"

"Very pleasant, my child. And what have you been doing?" She looked curiously down on her younger daughter.

Miriam answered, evasively, as she fingered one of the spoons, "Oh, just enjoying myself, lazily."

"Lazily?" Elizabeth re-echoed, passing her arm around her young cousin. "Don't tell stories like that. Aunt Laura, can't she stay on after I go?"

Miriam glanced at her mother, thinking of Pauline's plans for the June ball. But Mrs. Campbell presumably had other plans in which the June ball did not figure, and she graciously concurred. "Miriam will have finished her studies, and be free as far as those are concerned. She will have to turn to other things."

"Examinations, to wit," Miriam briefly interposed. "So thank you, Elizabeth, but I can't enjoy myself just yet."

"You're not in the social whirl yet, are you dear? You haven't budded?"

"No, Elizabeth, I haven't brought Miriam out yet. In fact, I hardly think I shall do so this year. She is not very strong, you know."

"Pauline is made of sterner stuff, is she?" Mrs. Danvers questioned. "Miriam is only fit for passing examinations?"

"Well, I'm going to pass some more of them!" Miriam spoke with a note of decision which caught the attention of the rest. "Mother, I'm going to the University this fall."

Mrs. Campbell got over her amazement in silence.

When she spoke, it was slowly. "I wouldn't say 'I'm going to,' Miriam. You would have to consult your father and me first. I'm not sure that he would consider that outlay. He complains of Pauline's china-painting as it is. What was your idea in speaking of the University?"

"Blame Sedley for it," Elizabeth said. "He talks Queen's to her by the hour."

"Surely Sedley does not thank Queen's for what success he has achieved." Her aunt's words were measured.

Elizabeth flushed swiftly. The sting of the innuendo found her in a way no attack on herself would ever have accomplished. That Sedley's success had *not* been marked was her constant disappointment.

"Sedley isn't responsible, Elizabeth. I've always wanted college."

Her mother caught up the word. "'Wanted' is a better way to express it, Miriam, certainly. Well, I'll talk it over with your father. If your heart is set on it, I should like to give you a year."

A voice broke in from the doorway. Pauline had overheard the last sentence. "A year won't do, mother. It's not a finish-off, like Miss Vogue's. She'll want four, anyway, and then two post-graduate. You don't know what you'll get yourself in for. College will spoil Miriam for anything sensible. You know that girl across the street from us. She took four years in 'Varsity and what's she good for now? She's dropped out of the fencing club and the burnt work class, and she even refused to do anything for the church bazaar!"

The eyes of Miriam and Elizabeth shot an exchange. I'm no good at those things anyway, Pauline," the younger sister retorted. "Mother, did you see the set of Dickens that Elizabeth got? Little beauties they are." She fondled the slim, smooth volumes.

"Very nice, indeed, Elizabeth. They will just tuck into

some little shelves by the ingle-nook. If you could have a tiny cupboard made with leaded panes, quite low, with a broad shelf on top for holding ornaments, say this bronze vase, the effect would be very good."

"Have you read them all, Elizabeth?" Miriam had dropped in a white fluff on the floor, scanning the titles. "I like 'Our Mutual Friend,' don't you, and 'Bleak House'? 'Bleak House' has none of the hideous creatures that are in some of the others; oh, except the 'Spontaneous Combustion.'"

The others were making their way downstairs where some one at the piano had struck up in tentative exuberance,

> "'Tis thy wedding morning, shining in the skies,
> 'Tis thy wedding morning—Rise, sweet maid, arise!"

"Wouldn't you like to borrow a couple of them, Miriam?" Her cousin joined her on the floor. "Post them to me when you're finished. Are you going to Cape Breton this summer?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, I hope you'll be able to. I wish we could spend our honeymoon there. I'd like to meet your black-eyed John Hielanman fishing knee-deep in Trout Brook."

Miriam laughed. "With a grasshopper for bait. I had forgotten I told you. He made quite a picture. But you couldn't get a word from him. I tried for half an hour and all he would say was 'Oh, yes' and 'Oh, I don't know.' He gave me his whole string of fish, though, at the end."

There were voices down at the front door and a certain laugh that sent Elizabeth's colour leaping to her cheeks. Miriam, obeying an uncontrollable impulse, slipped her arms around the older girl. "You're going to

be the happiest! He's just splendid. Oh, Elizabeth, I think you will have the dearest life together."

Elizabeth's blue eyes shone deep and true. She looked down smilingly at her cousin. "So will you, Miriam, when your turn comes. But that must not be for ever so long, remember!"

"Where's Elizabeth?" some one called from below.

"Elizabeth! Bridelet! You're wanted." Sedley came up the front stairs. "Here's another parcel for you, and Tom is sitting in the library like patience on a monument. What's the matter with sweet Coz? What was Elizabeth saying to you?"

"Oh, we were just talking about marriage."

He laughed down at her. "A long way off for you, Miriam."

"Well, yes, it is, rather."

"I should hope so. Meantime what are you planning for this summer? You should stay on here and keep Mother company."

"Why, you're forgetting my exams.! And then I'm going to Aunt Hannah's in Cape Breton."

"As atonement for the others while they sport elsewhere?"

"Indeed it's no atonement. I love it there. I can hardly wait when I think of those woods and mountains and lakes and the beautiful drives, and Aunt Hannah's buns and bannock, and the cream and the trout—such delicious trout, Sedley."

"I haven't been down since I was a youngster," Sedley reflected. "So this is the end of the Shakespeare reading."

"Until October only. I'm coming to college."

"Are you? Did you speak to Aunt Laura? What did she say?"

"She didn't say no. Oh, yes, I'm coming."

Sedley's face was radiant. "That's worth half a lifetime to me. Miriam, you must profit by all my mistakes. You'll let me help you make your course better than mine was? I know you'll take higher rank; oh, yes you will. But there are other things than the curriculum."

"I'll come to you about every little thing, Sedley. How fortunate that you and not Fyfe Boulding are living here. I don't need to see him at all if I don't want to. I'll just forget that he's my cousin." Her earnest, eager face changed suddenly. "There's Mother calling!"

Half an hour later the Campbells were making their way to the hotel through the leafy paths of the old Kingston Park in the warm hush of the June evening. Off to the west the sky showed faintly coloured. Far down on the left stretched the blue waters of Lake Ontario. Before them the white limestone buildings of Queen's University rose majestically from their nest of foliage.

"This evening air is grateful. The house was close, oppressive," Mrs. Campbell averred, lifting her face to the breeze. "Why are you turning this way, Pauline?"

"It's much shorter," Pauline contended, skilfully piloting her mother to the side path down which came swinging two cadets from the Royal Military College, flipping their swagger sticks, their scarlet tunics vivid through the green.

"I suppose Sedley goes to the June ball," Pauline remarked pensively, gazing after them.

"To the R.M.C.? Very probably. He dances."

"Oh, indeed I know that. I'll never forget dancing with him at the Royal Muskoka. He looked so splendid that all the girls wanted an introduction, especially that Cora Hotchkiss. I never told her that he was my cousin, and you may be sure that I kept him out of her way."

"She's rather pretty."

"Who? Cora? Oh, she's pink and white. But did you

ever see her in green? Really she looked ghastly the other morning, hurrying along Metcalfe Street with such a tight dress—made scrimp, you know."

Her mother laughed lightly over the description. "Not on exhibition, that time," she allowed. "One never knows what eyes are watching. However, I would not worry over Sedley. He'll have scores of friends before settling down. I hope he will not spoil Miriam. She was looking quite excited, I thought."

Pauline agreed. "All the presents; nothing remarkable about them; and she thinks Tom Rutherford a sort of Fairy Prince. Just a school teacher!"

Mrs. Campbell reddened, biting her lip in vexation. "I wish you would moderate your voice, Pauline. Such a fact does not need to be shouted from the house-tops."

Did Mrs. Campbell forget, or did she choose to ignore the fact that four years as a country school teacher had given her husband his start in life?

As for Tom Rutherford, he did not need their praise nor their blame either. He was in a Paradise of his own making; and if Mrs. Campbell and Pauline saw nothing of the beauty of the evening, at least the lovers saw it. It is through the medium of love that beauty is always recognised. Elizabeth, leaning her dark head against the white pillar of the verandah, let her eyes rest on the loveliness of that last night in her father's home.

"You're not going so very far away," Tom reminded her.

"Not in distance," she conceded, "but in actuality I'm leaving them altogether, and all my will to the contrary."

His fair boyish face flushed. "When I remember that it is *for me,* I feel very unworthy, Elizabeth."

She turned to him then, but the gathering darkness hid the beauty of her eyes. Music had crept into her tone.

"It is for myself, as well," she told him. "It is be-

cause without you I could never be content, never be myself."

Tom understood. It was for an understanding such as this that he had kept the soil of his life soft, his imagination free, his sympathies tender; and for a love such as this that he had worked and waited, never doubting that from out the throng of cheerful acquaintances, one would emerge, single in the field.

He had always kept a white throne in his heart for one woman. His solitary walks had been sanctified by a mystical companion, clear-souled, brooding over him with love, the mistress of his holiest dreams. One radiant day the presence was visualised and the fragrant charm of a beautiful woman touched his senses. The floodgates were opened now and the inrush of sympathy and comprehension of all lovely things well-nigh engulfed him.

Elizabeth was to be his. She would share his half-formed fancies, his wonderings, his whimsical humor, his faith. Had she not promised this one evening, tenderly serious, while the waves lapped beside them and the old Martello Tower stood a dark sentinel behind, and far ahead the grey secret of the lake stretched out in mystery, lit only by the stars?

CHAPTER II: WHEN MEN ARE MERRIEST

"'Tis ever common
That men are merriest when away from home."
—*Henry V,* Act I, Sc. 2.

It was cool under the bridge. The white sand had sifted up around the stone base, and in among the loose rocks and logs worn smooth by the wash of the waves. If you leaned over the stone supports and looked down into the clear green water you might surprise a fine trout darting into the shade of the bridge, away from the seductive fly, away from the aggressive city angler whose aim was its annexation, and who, panoplied in rubber suit 'gainst any hint of damp, stood out waist deep in the brook.

Two of these city fishermen were already at work that warm July morning. Their creels were empty, but hope was in their hearts. Apart from the thought of a good catch, there was exhilaration in the sport, and charm in the beauty of the still inland pools, backed by the straight little firs and the mountains beyond.

Near the bridge there were other fishermen who had neither rubber suits nor creels nor patent fishing-rods. But they were standing in the water, too, as far as their trousers would permit, some of them indeed much farther.

Over the bridge rattled and rumbled an occasional cart or carriage, their drivers exchanging a few monosyllables with Lauchy MacDonald, the storekeeper at the Brook, who lounged over the railing.

"How's the fish, Lauchy?"

"Scarce enough. Some good catches though. That fellow from the mountain has made a haul."

"He goes in deep."

"Well, I don't know as that matters. He's on to the trick of throwing the fly, someway. It's not a good day for biting—too warm."

Under the bridge, though, it was cool; cool and quiet and murmurous. And if you did not want to read you could watch the lake out beyond, where Trout Brook emptied, and trickle the sand through your fingers and snap the satin-smooth white twigs and day dream unmolested. There were no examinations and no one to trouble you; all that the people at the house demanded of you was to "fatten up."

Miriam luxuriated in it all. Why Pauline did not love to stay at Aunt Hannah's passed her comprehension. How she could prefer the stereotyped summer resort with its constant endeavour after fresh gowns and fresh acquaintances, where every one lived in the limelight and talked about every one else, was a marvel. The thought of the board bills alone would haunt one, especially when one's father endured the dizzying heat of Ottawa's business streets to pay for it all. Here everything was bountiful. Big potato fields and pails of milk and jugs of cream, and fish for the catching.

Over the bridge above her came the familiar joggety trot of the old brown mare carrying His Majesty's mail to the white house on the hill. Miriam's interest in the outside world suddenly quickened. For this was Tuesday, and Saturday morning, the last mail-day, seemed far in the past. There might be letters for her.

She slipped around the bend, her white sneakers bridging the boulders with ease. There was a general stir of interest. Some of the fishermen were hauling in their lines with the prospect of bigger catch in the shape of reading-material. Lauchy had left a lanky little neighbour lad in charge of the store and was even now trudging up

the road. Miriam started in pursuit. At the same moment, from behind a clump of alder-bushes down below the bridge a young man stepped out swiftly and came running up the slope. She laughed to herself as she looked. Behold her "John Hielanman" in person!

He never saw her. There was only one thing in the landscape for him at that moment and he made for it, his long legs covering the distance up that hill in an unthinkably short time. She followed more slowly, trailing her sunshade behind as she walked, in a little wavering line.

Down below lay the lake, all a-shimmer in the sweet morning air. From up above the cow-bells sounded through the rocky pastures on the cradle-hills and into the pine woods. They were mowing down below the road on a precipitous bit of meadow from which none but Highlanders would expect returns.

The sights and sounds of the fresh country morning folded her softly round like a solemn joy. She felt as though she could go on that way for miles and miles! Were there no one else in the universe and the trees and hills and lake remained, one could not be lonely. No, there was something worse than loneliness. Unwelcome companionship would you call it? But to be with those you loved in spots like these must indeed be heaven on earth or a honeymoon.

"Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path—how soft to pace!
This May—what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?"

The words went dreamily through her mind, as she reached the top of the hill.

Yes, there were letters for her. She opened her mother's first as she walked home again, and learned how

Pauline had carried all before her in the last "hop," and that the father was booked to join them some week-end soon. The letter closed with a warning to Miriam to guard against tan and sunburn, if possible to wear those thick cotton gloves and chiffon veil constantly.

Miriam laughed as she looked at her hands. They were certainly tanned. "Oh, well, as long as I'm not coming out this winter," she reflected, "College won't matter."

The other letter was from her cousin Sedley Danvers. She would keep it for a treat that afternoon, under the oak tree.

"Want a ride?" called a voice from the midst of a great load of hay behind her.

"Where shall I sit, Uncle John?"

"Just a minute and I'll fix you. Up you go! Why, you're getting fat. Any mail?"

She handed over his bundle and stretched out lazily on top of the big load.

"I'll stop at Lauchy's for a couple of hand rakes," her uncle called back. "We want everybody at work this afternoon. John Ronald has that piece below the road cut and there's going to be a change of weather. This is too hot to last. Are you good for work?"

"Why yes, Uncle. I'm with you," she assured him, heartily.

Down by the store there was an excited group. Miriam, looking over the top of the load, saw that the interest was centered in an official-looking document, in somebody's hands. Surely those were examination marks. She craned her neck farther out to look. Oh, she was slipping! In vain she clutched and clawed and called frantically. Down she came sliding and tumbling and sprawling with a bundle of hay right into the middle of the group on top of the precious paper.

"You're not hurt?" At first they were all solicitude.

But finding she was none the worse, there was a gradually increasing chorus of laughter. Miriam knew afterwards how funny she must have looked, but just then she was too embarrassed to see the joke. Her cheeks were deep-dyed and she stepped out of that bundle of hay as though it had insulted her. The little red-haired MacMillan boy was giggling foolishly.

"Thank you, no; I'm not hurt. I slipped someway."

"Trying to see too much," her uncle put in jocosely. "What were you reading, Hughie, that made all the commotion?"

Miriam stooped to brush the wisps of hay out of her skirt. Hughie was the black-eyed fisher-boy, and the tall man with the white beard must be Tom Angus Stewart, his father.

"It's the 'Grade A,' " he explained proudly. "I just got my results."

"And you've passed, of course."

"Oh, yes, I've passed." He folded the paper carefully.

Lauchy nodded emphatically. "Hughie will be going up to Canady next Fall," he announced, "to Principal Grant's college."

"To Queen's?" Miriam wheeled around in sudden delight. She forgot all about the hay-cart and her awkward fall, forgot the way they had laughed at her. For a moment she was back in Kingston near those enticing stone buildings, and the air was frosty, autumnal, and the city was full of students.

"You're going to Queen's?" she repeated. "So am I. This Fall."

Hughie looked her over slowly. "Will girls be going to college?" His tone was too dubious to be complimentary. Miriam's back stiffened.

"Of course girls go. What marks did you get on 'A'? What did you do best in?"

"Algebra," he told her, "and physiology." They scanned the paper together. Her Uncle John was in the little red store, dickering over rakes and wasting the precious time he would need before evening if the hay were to be saved from a heavy downpour.

Hughie had made his lowest marks in English. But no wonder. His parents both spoke Gaelic, and, although the children had been sent to school to learn English, the teacher was not much better trained (in English) than they. The result was most peculiar construction and most original pronunciation. The great corrective influence was the presence in their home of a few standard English books, which, being few, were read and re-read. MacCheyne, Bunyan, Fox had unconsciously left their impress on the youth of the family, while the beauty and dignity of the Scriptural diction was ineffaceably impressed upon their memories.

"Why, I thought our English paper was easy," Miriam exclaimed. "I was finished half an hour too soon. Perhaps I didn't do any too well, though. You never know how you're going to come out. And then yours was a much harder exam." She turned as her uncle emerged with the hand rakes. "No, I don't think I'll ride home, Uncle, thank you. I'll walk."

"You don't think you'd like to try another slide," he laughed. "Well, we must be moving along. We'll not be getting any dinner to-day."

Tom Angus waved hospitably towards his house on the hill. "Come along, all of you, and have dinner with us," he urged. "Mary Hannah will be pleased to see you. We killed yesterday and they're having the puddings to-day. Come now. You haven't brought this young lady in for even a glass of cream since she came. You can put up the mare in the barn."

But amid expostulations and urgings Uncle John finally

made it clear that he must proceed homewards. As a compromise, however, Miriam was detailed to accompany the hospitable Tom Angus. She was rather glad. It was fun to see the inside of people's houses. Besides, she wanted to talk college with Hughie. It would be so nice to have some one she knew already when she went there.

"Don't stay too long after dinner," her Uncle John called after her. "We'll be needing you in the hay-field."

"Indeed you'll not be getting her!" Hughie's father retorted. "Shame on you, John Campbell, making little girls do your work!"

The other man laughed good-naturedly as he strode off by the hayload.

"It's not the raking I mind," Miriam explained. "It's the field mice. They glide along so suddenly when you're not thinking of them."

Hughie burst into a roar of uncontrollable laughter. This was more in keeping with his idea of girls, this fear of mice, than college courses. And she had found the English paper easy! He stole a secret glance at her. She was stepping quick and high, with those white shoes of hers. Most likely she was afraid of toads as well.

"And have you the Gaelic?" the older man pursued, looking at the girl in a kindly way. "Is your father forgetting to teach you?"

"I'm afraid father is forgetting it himself. It always upsets mother when he starts. She says he's over-tired. Sometimes, though, he talks it to me when we're out walking, and I say *'O tha'* ("Oh, yes") or *'Cha n-eil'* ("Oh, no") every little while to make him laugh. And then when it gets monotonous I call *'O toirmisg oirbh'* ("Oh, stop!"), and he does."

Hughie looked at his father and they both burst out laughing. Those fragments of Gaelic on a foreign tongue delighted them beyond measure. "She can speak it all

right," Tom Angus testified. Hugh was repeating *"O tha"* under his breath with Miriam's exact intonation.

They turned in at the large gate and the big dog, Gelert, came swinging down to meet them, sniffing suspiciously at the hem of Miriam's gingham frock. The roadway led through meadows not yet cut and starred thick with daisies. A long line of willows stooped carelessly over the course of a little brook which was making for the lake through grass and boulders. Its course was stopped by a miniature mill, whose paddlewheel was hard at work churning butter. Below the mill a flock of geese paddled in the water. A sheepskin, hung on the fence to dry, told the tale of the missing lamb in the flock, and incidentally promised fresh meat for dinner. It was not very pleasant to be faced with the source of supplies in that way.

At the house the welcome was unmistakable. Miriam was encircled and kissed and questioned and laughed over and hugged as though she had been a long-lost friend. Everything she said appeared to furnish rare amusement for the rest, and the fact that she had suddenly come in for dinner would seem to be the most appropriate act of her life. She was borne off to the upstairs front bedroom where the window opened wide on a glory of meadow, lake and mountain. The walls were still of white plaster and there were hooked mats on the floor. But the bedroom suite was of oak and the few pictures were most up-to-date, especially the motto on white satin ribbon,

> "Sleep sweetly in this quiet room
> Oh thou, whoe'er thou art."

It must be the trained nurse sister, she concluded, home from Boston, who had brought these specialties, for the stores of the next village were miles away, and they never had mottoes or pictures anyway. Yes, there was a sun-

beam snap of her in her nurse's cap. Miriam studied it, smoothing back her thick hair. The sister had the same straight features that Hughie had.

A knock on the door and the mother entered with a small tray. "Just a bit of lunch, dearie, till the dinner will be ready," she explained. "Sit you down here by the window, and have something; do! You must be hungry. They were after butchering yesterday and the puddings will be taking so long to cook, the creatures! And there's the fresh roast, but it's not done yet; but, oh, it will be done whatever, before long. Come now, *m'eudal* (my dear) and have your drink. You'll be faint without a bite."

The girl was quite overcome with such a flood of attention. It is surprisingly easy to adjust one's self to luxuries, however, and Miriam found herself quite in her element sipping the tumbler of cream and eating those slices of *bonnach* (bannock), spread thick with matchless butter. Even the tiny dish of wild strawberry jam and the gingerbread disappeared under the urgent admonition of Hughie's mother. "Come now, *mo graidheag* (my loveliest of dearies), make your lunch out. Indeed it's a poor bite to bring you, but it's something to stay you, and you'll be the better of your dinner when it will be ready."

Miriam thought she could never even contemplate dinner that day, but she had not reckoned on Cape Breton air. She made a tour of the barn with the older brother, Alan, and visited the churn again and drank from the clear spring underneath the willows, and swung in the hammock on the front verandah, entertaining the crowd of men delightfully with her Gaelic songs.

"I'll be bound you don't know *'O ro mo nighean donn bhoidheach'* " ("Oh, my pretty nut-brown maiden"), one of them said to draw her out.

Yes, she knew that and sang it for them, and after-

wards *"Ged tha mi gun crodh gun aighean"* ("Though I lack both cows and heifers"). "This is the one I like best," she continued, her cheeks flushed with the exhilaration of so much unwonted attention. And before she knew it herself, off she went in a step dance, toe, heel, toe, on the bare verandah boards in perfect time.

"Sirum sios, sirum suas
Cha robh chnaimh do Ruaridh agam."

("Seek him high, seek him low,
Not a trace of Rory was there.")

There were roars of laughter, rounds of applause, and cries of *"Suas a!"* and when the call sounded down the hall, "Come in, all, to dinner," Alan could scarcely keep from snatching her up and whirling her off with him to the dining-room.

Just as they were seated at the table and Miriam was gazing in amazement at the size of the roast and the other platter of dark and light slices of—well, what were they?—and concluding that they would need full supplies for such a tableful, Tom Angus, about to bow for grace, spied something by the barn.

"What is it, then, Tom?" his wife cried, impatiently. "Is it the mare in the grain? Run you, Hughie, and shoo her out, the beast!" Her husband waited a full minute before replying, "It will be John Malcolm MacInnis' horse from Strathlorne, I doubt." He rose slowly, still eyeing the approaching party. Then suddenly his whole face lighted.

"It's Mary Dolena herself, *eudal!*" ("darling!") he exclaimed, pushing from the table, "and Uncle Hugh."

With a smothered exclamation, Mrs. Stewart, trembling with loving excitement, snatched at her apron, poked at her hair, and was out on the verandah before her husband was half-way up the hall.

A tall, handsome girl in a tailored suit had the little black figure in her arms a second later, while Tom Angus was wringing the hands of his eldest brother, Judge Stewart, of Regina.

"I brought your girl along, Hannah," he called out, his fine face alight with pleasure. "I had to go to Boston on business, and I just walked into her boarding-house. She was going on another case, and I made her pack up then and there. Ha!" He started suddenly, and faced towards the hall, sniffing, *"Maragan!"* ("Pudding!") he exclaimed, in great delight. "I tell you this is worth coming East for!"

They made room at that marvellous table for the newcomers and the third cousin who had driven them over. Miriam, whose gingham was uncomfortable in the neighbourhood of the smart Boston suit, and who felt her tongue grow stiff at the easy Americanised accent of the owner, wondered at the way Judge Stewart went through his share of the puddings which she was trying to learn to like for her father's sake. The dark kind wasn't so bad, but the white! He ate the lamb, too, voraciously, and the beets, and nearly yelled over the new potatoes, bursting their jackets in two huge vegetable dishes. Mrs. Stewart was for pouring cream over everything they ate with a reckless disregard of consequent refections.

Tom Angus, in a moment's lull, thinking their other guest forgotten, set about drawing Miriam out.

"You remember Roderick Campbell of the Hill," he began, smiling in the girl's direction. "This will be his youngest daughter; *Ruaridh Mor"* ("Big Rory"), he added, by way of jogging his brother's memory.

"Oh, yes, *'Ruaridh na stron chrom!"* ("Rory of the aquiline nose!") the Judge burst out laughing. "And is this his girl? Well, well, I'm getting old." He leant

across the table and shook Miriam's hand cordially. "And what do they call you?"

"Isabel Margaret Miriam," she faltered. "Miriam, they call me."

In any other company the length of the old-fashioned name would have furnished some amusement, and Miriam's face was as red as the dish of beets in anticipation, for she knew from experience at school how oddly that name always struck people.

But the Highlanders all nodded shrewdly, mentally affixing each name to its respective ancestor. "Pauline," whose title had gratified her mother's vagrant fancy, would have provoked some entertainment. But in this community where the names of the forefathers were visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, the girl found herself for once choicely and becomingly designated.

"'Isabel Margaret Miriam,'" the Judge repeated, balancing a mealy potato on the tip of his fork as he pulled off the pink skin. "That will be for your grandmother, your auntie, and your great-grandmother MacLean."

"No, no, Hugh," said young Hughie's mother. "Her great-grandmother will be a MacInnes."

"Tut, woman, I know better. Her grandmother was a sister of Alexander MacLean, *Mac Ian' ic Alastair* (son of John, son of Alexander) from Glen Morien."

That settled it. "And how is your father?" asked Judge Stewart. "I haven't seen him since we were boys. Will he be coming down this summer? I'd like to go fishing with him again. We used to have great talks in those old days down in Sandy Campbell's cove. I often think of them out on the prairies. Regina's all right, but there's no place like Cape Breton."

At the name "Regina" Miriam pricked up her ears. She wished she could summon composure to say, "You

come from Regina, Judge Stewart? I have relatives there. Perhaps you know them? The Bouldings. Mrs. Nathaniel Boulding is my mother's sister." She had a secret misgiving, however, that the Judge's face would not light up in the same way that it had at the mention of her father's name. While she hesitated, a heavy step was heard in the kitchen followed by a murmuring flow of Gaelic. Every one pushed back his chair, the plates being empty, anyway.

CHAPTER III: OFT EXPECTATION FAILS

"Oft expectation fails and most oft there
Where most it promises.
—*All's Well That Ends Well,* Act II, Sc. 1.

"It's Chursty," said Tom Angus, "come to pay her respects. She must have seen you driving past."

"What, *Chursty Ian Bhain?*" ("Christy, daughter of John the fair?") his brother cried. "Bless me, not a day older," he exclaimed, stooping as he entered the low kitchen. *"Cia mar tha sibh fhein a Chursty?"* ("How are you, yourself, Christy?") his large hand held out.

A big, spare frame clothed in black print, a wrinkled, masculine face looking out from a large bandanna, and feet which strove to seem at ease in stiff boots, such was Chursty, the character of the whole countryside. She had come from the Highlands of Scotland at two years of age, she would tell you, and she lived presumably with her nephew. For the most part, however, her days were spent in one continuous round of *"ceilidh"* (visiting) and *"tea bheag"* (little teas). She gathered news and spread it far and wide. No society column could furnish half the personal tidbits that Chursty managed to collect on a day's rounds, nor retail them with such relish and such embellishment. Her sober, black figure moved through the waving grass in the little cemetery below the church whenever any one was laid to rest. She was the first to taste the bottle of whisky stored up for celebration over the new baby. And did an old inhabitant return for a visit, it was Chursty who heard or saw him before any one else and followed up straightway to get the news.

She had tramped barefoot up the road to see the Judge. But just inside the lower gate she drew on a pair of hard boots, and tucked out of sight in her calico pocket the old clay pipe, her daily companion. Chursty felt a certain pride in this masculine indulgence, yet, in company with a class of her sisters who court an unsavory distinction in this direction, there lingered in her bosom a shred of delicacy. She knew John Campbell's niece was at the Stewart's. Lauchy had told her as she passed the store, and she preferred not to shock the girl's youthful susceptibilities at the outset of their acquaintance. Still she had her pipe by her and there lodged deep in her heart the hope that the Judge might not have forgotten his old gift of tobacco.

Nor had he. There it was in the corner of his grip, purchased by a happy thought at Strathlorne on his way, but none the less welcome, and the sight of that fragrant weed so wrought on the old woman's affections that the flood-gates of Gaelic were opened wide and out there streamed questions, exclamations and reminiscences, interspersed with a dozen terms of endearment.

Miriam always felt shut out in the cold when Gaelic began, and she thought it high time to be turning homewards. Sedley's letter burned in her pocket. Besides, Hughie's mother must want to talk to Mary Dolena. But when would the dishes ever be washed? There they lay in chill confusion in the deserted dining-room, and the kitchen fire was quite out, resting from its labors after the achievement of the dinner, puddings, roast and all. It would seem officious to offer to help. Besides, there wasn't a woman in sight. Miriam hesitated at the front door. Sounds of voices came from above. Happily she had no hat to get. Her sunshade was in the porch. Still she must say good-bye. She sauntered out to the veran-

dah. Yes, there was Hughie by the barn. She could speak to him.

What a soft, springy walk it was, with the breeze folding and floating her light skirts about her and the long, murmurous silence of the country all around. One would think that nobody would want to leave such an idyllic spot for the traffic of cities. And yet there was Hughie as eager for college as she was, and Hughie's uncle, who had pushed out and away to far Regina. And he was known and influential, while his brother on the farm would never be heard of further than Strathlorne or Margaree. Yet you could not say he was wasting his life any more than her Uncle John. If Uncle John had married, his boys might have gone to college, but his girls would never fare further than Boston. After all, she was glad that her father had left Cape Breton; glad, too, that she had Cape Breton to come back to on a summer's day like this when it would be stifling in Ottawa.

"I think I'll go on home now," she told Hughie, as she came up to the barn. "Will you tell your mother I didn't want to disturb her to say good-bye?"

Hugh was sitting on the side of the roller, whittling. "Oh, you'd better not hurry," he rejoined. "It's early yet."

Miriam whirled her parasol around as it rested on her shoulder. "I've quite a way to go, and it might rain," she said, glancing up at the fleecy clouds.

Now Hugh was about to drive to the store for fresh supplies of groceries, and he longed to ask her to go with him. But he would not get over the teasing for a year.

"You'll tell your mother, won't you?" the girl repeated, moving slowly away and still twirling her parasol. "I wouldn't want her to think me rude."

"Yes, I'll tell her." He snapped the knife shut and

rose abruptly. "Are you going down by the road? There's a short cut through the grain."

"I thought they didn't let you."

"Let you what?"

"Walk in the grain. They're always chasing the horses out of it."

"Oh, I mean along by the fence. See, this way." He led off promptly, glad of the excuse, then stopped short. "Can you get over?"

She lay down and rolled, coming out on the grain side. Hughie laughed as he vaulted after.

"There's Chursty leaving now," he announced. "I suppose she couldn't wait any longer for her smoke."

"Smoke?" the girl echoed.

"Yes, didn't you know she smoked? If we wait here we'll see her light up when she gets behind the barn."

They dropped down inside the fence and peeked through the bars. The old woman, quite unsuspecting, came tramping along painfully in her company footgear. She looked around cautiously after she passed the last barn door, but seeing no one near she fumbled with a little old knife and filled her black pipe. Then down she sat and began to pull off her boots.

This was too much for Miriam. Despite herself, she snickered. Whether it was the sound, or the sudden glimpse of the light frock among the grain, it would be hard to tell, but Chursty stumbled up in haste, tucked her boots under her arms, crammed the pipe in her pocket, and started on her old swinging gait down the road.

"She saw us," Miriam whispered. Hughie stretched his brown neck over the fence-rails. "Look at her go! Can you see her? See her bare feet!" he chuckled.

Miriam's white sneakers promptly mounted two fence rails for a better view. "She's smoking," the girl cried out suddenly. "I mean her dress. Look at the smoke."

In another second she was up and over the top of the fence, dropping like a squirrel on the other side. Hughie was only beginning to understand the situation when the girl went flying down the road.

"You're burning, Chursty! You're on fire! Your dress is full of smoke." She panted as she ran.

The old woman seemed not to hear. Then on a sudden she caught the smell of burning and jumped as though the very *"donas"* (devil) were behind. Her yell of terror could be heard far down the cove. *"Dhia Eudal; tha mi am theine!"* ("Good Lord! I'm on fire!") she cried, tearing at her calico gown in helpless confusion.

But Miriam was quicker. They were just beside the spring, and an old bucket lay on the flat stone. Up it came, brimming, and poured over the old woman, sousing her again and again till she was in new peril of drowning.

Trembling with indignation and relief, Chursty fumbled among the soggy folds of cotton. Down on the flat stone crashed the old clay pipe, smashing into a dozen bits, and she muttered an invective so fiercely Gaelic that even Miriam caught its significance.

But the tobacco was spared. The sodden black lump was dragged out carefully and wrapped in her bandanna headdress which had escaped the deluge. Nodding and muttering at Miriam, whether in thanks or contempt she could not determine, Chursty swung on her solitary way.

"I hope she won't get cold with all that wetting."

"No, she won't get cold. She's as tough as a gad." Hughie came up breathless. "She's got it in for you," he added mischievously.

"Really, I didn't mean to soak her so."

"It will do her good. It will be the first bath she's had this year."

Miriam laughed uneasily. She felt afraid of the fierce

old woman. "Well, I'll say good-bye again," she said hurriedly. "I'll never get home at this rate."

"Good-bye just now, then," Hughie returned, remembering his trip to the store.

Miriam sped down the hill, looking towards the west to see whether that rain were at hand. Had Uncle John got his hay in? Yes, there was a load far down, making for the barn. Perhaps she ought to go up to the house first. She met Aunt Hannah coming from the spring with the creamer. There was a strange buggy by the barn door.

"Run you in and talk to the minister," she panted, refusing Miriam's offered help. "I've got muffins and gingerbread in the 'ofen' and I'll bring in a glass of cream. He'll not stay to tea. He's going to the Outlet to see Reverend Neil MacFarlane from West Lake."

"I'm not very presentable," Miriam parried unwillingly.

"Oh, you're fine, *m'eudal* (dear). Run then like the good girl. He'll be after finding the time long."

The minister was seated on the haircloth sofa, his hands crossed over the handle of his umbrella, his mild blue gaze fixed on the western windows in expectation of the coming storm which would surely drench him before he reached the Outlet. He really didn't want the glass of cream, but it would never do to say so, and of course it was quite a long way to the spring.

Now Miriam had always harboured a secret dread of ministers. They seemed the embodiment of the mystery and solemnity of religion. There was about them something almost uncanny, as though they savoured of the Black Art. Their wives she pitied. No doubt they were daily subjected to an inspection of soul, kindly conducted of course, but none the less thorough. The inspection probably began in a pleasant conversational way like the illustrations in their sermons but ended with a strong personal application. From childhood Miriam had feared to

find herself alone when the minister made his semi-annual call. She was afraid he would begin to question her as to her spiritual condition, and while she was not without convictions and aspirations of a certain type, she shunned laying bare her soul to the gaze of a practised eye which had looked into the souls of old and orthodox Christians of unquestioned conversion and rich experience. Her experience was so meagre and as for her conversion she sometimes wondered whether it had ever taken place.

But here was Auntie's minister waiting alone, and she must go in and talk to him. It couldn't be very long now till the biscuits were done, and she could talk fast about everything secular so as to keep him from getting on dangerous ground.

He turned his kind eyes as she entered the room. "And how are you?" he asked, rising to shake hands. "You're Miss Campbell's niece," he added.

"Yes, from Ottawa. I'm visiting her for a few weeks. Father used to live here, and he always likes us to come down for the summer, but Mother doesn't like it so well as Murray Bay or Kennebunkport. But I do. I like everything here, even to the cream. Don't you like cream, Mr. Farquharson? Auntie's bringing you in some in a moment." She paused to get breath, confident that he could find no opening there for a spiritual application.

Mr. Farquharson was smiling at her vivacity. "Yes, I certainly like cream," he agreed pleasantly. "But your aunt should not trouble. I just dropped in for a minute on my way to the Outlet to see her and have a few words with you for your father's sake."

Miriam's colour flamed up like a signal. Now it was coming. A few words from the minister could mean only one thing. It was just as well to have it over and be branded as a goat once for all, as to have this continual terror and uncertainty.

"How are you getting on at school?" the minister continued, wondering at the girl's discomfiture.

"School"—Miriam gasped in sudden awful relief. In she plunged to a headlong description of all the teachers in the Collegiate Institute, with hysterical portraiture of their various peculiarities and the particulars of the many good jokes the witty ones in the various forms had had at their expense. And what *she* had said to the Principal and what *he* had replied and how all the form had *roared,* and so on and so on until she drew up again, certain that the minister would conclude she was a hopelessly worldly character.

"And you're going to Queen's," Mr. Farquharson rejoined enthusiastically, "to my old *Alma Mater.*"

"Is it yours, too?" Miriam gasped. "Why it's everybody's. Every one seems to have gone there."

"You're sure to hear about it if they have, at any rate," he laughed. "We're a close corporation, perhaps too close for our own good, or the good of the college. But that's an open question. This Queen's spirit has buoyed up the University in many a crisis, many a crisis," he repeated, gazing towards the window again.

"Mr. Farquharson, I'm after being ashamed to be so long with the lunch, but the 'ofen' was slow. But you'll sit in and have a bite." Aunt Hannah Campbell was dragging the album off the centre table and spreading a cloth whereon she deposited plates of hot biscuits and muffins and a jug of cream which might make a stronger man quail so soon after his dinner. Aunt Hannah's conservative estimate of the digestive capacity of an ordinary minister would certainly prove startling. Mr. Farquharson was accommodating, well-meaning, and resourceful, but the appealing glance of his blue eyes away from those plates of hot bread would have touched any one but a Highland woman. Even while Miriam was breathlessly

excusing herself, Aunt Hannah mercilessly proceeded to pour out cream.

On a pile of hay in the loft, the last load for that afternoon, Miriam pulled her cousin's letter out of her pocket. The barn was very quiet, save for the flap-flap of the swallows up among the rafters and the crown beam above her head. She stretched herself full-length in the warm hay.

"Dear little cousin:—

"You want the setting first of all, I know. Well, I am sitting all alone in the dining-room at the big table with my fountain and a pad. You always like a pad for letters, you know, because it 'looks limitless.' I have the house all to myself this afternoon for mother has gone out to the country with father to visit one of his cases, and Mary Ann has her afternoon off. So I volunteered to answer the telephone and bell. We miss Elizabeth terribly. Not about answering the bells, but in a thousand ways. She said she had heard from you two or three times. You have only written *me* one real letter. Did you know you left your copy of Longfellow behind? I found it on the back drawing-room mantelpiece the day I returned from Toronto and I carried it off captive to my room, with all its queer pencillings and underlinings and question marks, just like a Miriam in miniature. Whatever can you see in *The Bridge* or *Endymion?* You have both those marked, and

> "'There is no light at all in heaven
> But the white light of stars.'

You underscored that in a most impressive way. Now, why? I wish I had you here beside me this afternoon to put you through your facings to see what you have been reading. I'm glad Longfellow is here so you won't study

him too much. I'm pretty sure you can't find anything but Burns at Uncle John's.

"Letter from your father just arrived. He says the Hotchkiss family are moving to Kingston next month. You know Cora, don't you? I met her at Muskoka. It's too hot for anything here. I've been out to two tennis teas and a hop at the yacht squadron. That's the extent of my dissipation. I'm only writing staccato this afternoon. They say your soul never wakes up till after dinner. I think mine went to sleep the morning you left and it's still comatose.

"Write me as soon as this reaches you. Whether you're hay-making or eating porridge, stop short and say, 'I must write to Sedley immediately,'

"Because I am,

"Always,

"Your

"Most loving

"Cousin."

Miriam climbed down from the loft and made her way out. The clouds had burst in a sudden shower and then passed off. Up the slope of the hill, where the hay had been cut, one could look across the lake. The evening sky was fresh, bright-coloured, clean. Some breath of Nature's loveliness stole into her heart as she looked.

CHAPTER IV: SPEAK FAIR

"Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator.
Look sweet, speak fair."
—*Comedy of Errors,* Act III, Sc. 2.

"Elmer, stop calling! You'll wake Baby!"

"Well, Mamma," this in a horse whisper, up the stairs, "may I have a soda biscuit? This bread's so stale."

"No! If the bread is good enough for your father it will surely do for you. And hurry or you'll be late."

The dining-room door shut. Mrs. Dan Rutherford glanced towards the crib. There would soon be peace. It was nearly school time.

"Mamma, where's my scribbler? There's the first bell! Mamma!"

Mrs. Rutherford ran down the stairs in a whirlwind of exasperation. "Didn't I tell you not to shout? Your book must be where you left it. And you must not stamp through the parlor."

"Well, I can't find my scribbler nor my pencil. And there's the first bell."

"Here 'tis." Elmer emerged triumphantly. "On the piano, and your pencil inside it. Say, Mamma, there's some one pounding on the back door."

"Oh, the milkman, I suppose. And the bottles aren't ready." She started down the hall. "And there's the telephone!"

As the front door slammed after the boys, a petulant cry from above heralded the return to consciousness of Miss Vivian Alicia Rutherford.

But her mother was already "on the 'phone."

"Oh, is it you, Dan?" Annoyance struggled with sur-

prise in her tone. It was odd to have her husband call her up so soon after leaving.

"A letter from Tom? To stay here? Well, upon my word, I think you were pretty cool to ask them without consulting me. I did? Well, I may have said that, but I certainly never thought they would come. Oh, it's all right for you, but it's a different matter for me with a perfect stranger, and a bride at that, and no help and all these children. Oh, I'll manage some way. I'll have to, of course."

She hung up the telephone sharply, and mounted the stairs. Her feelings were not unruffled. This new sister-in-law had figured largely in her mind of late. The account of the church wedding, from which Baby's cold had kept her, had been really quite disconcerting, with its description of all the fine guests. Little Mrs. Dan Rutherford was very ambitious socially and expected some *prestige* from this connection with the Danvers and Campbells.

Did she forget how much they all owed to her husband, to her quiet, plodding Dan, of the Cherry Cordial Company, whose self-denial had put the younger brother, Tom, through an honour course at College and settled him as English master in the Kingston Collegiate? It was Tom's personality, Tom's worth and Tom's education that gave tone to all the elaborate flutter of that wedding.

Tom would have said that it was Elizabeth. No one could have convinced him that this long and arduous road had at the end a better reward than that which he had won—his Elizabeth, tall, fearless and tender. And now that their ways had joined, and life, their life together, stretched out a golden pathway down the years, he must have, to walk it gladly, the blessing of that good brother, Dan, who had helped him on the rocky pathway of his early days.

"Let us pay Dan a few days' visit before the Collegiate opens. It would do him a world of good." This had been his suggestion.

"Why, yes, dear, if Clara would be ready to have us."

"She'll never be ready. But she'll give us a welcome, you'll see."

"Well, then, that's all I want. And the children will be the best part of it."

Tom laughed apologetically. "They're not exactly your kind of children, Elizabeth. Little rowdies, the boys are, and the girl a baby thing."

"Why Tom! All children are my kind. Did you hear the compliment I got from the little girl next door? She told Mother that I had 'a children's face,' and 'that means a loving face,' she explained."

Tom looked at her as though he thought an angel's face the best description.

Brother Dan being duly notified, the message had come through to Clara on this first morning of school, when the five and seven year old boys were being started on the royal road. Clara Rutherford was dismayed. She had doubtfully concurred in Dan's invitation, feeling certain that it would have no attraction for "Miss Danvers."

She did not count on Elizabeth's fine sensitiveness. Nor could she understand that her decision to accept Brother Dan's hospitality was prompted by a desire to show her appreciation of this most unselfish older brother who had made her husband's success a possible thing.

They would arrive Thursday morning and leave Friday evening. Dan was as excited as a boy. "You'll want some extra things," he urged. "I'll write you out a cheque at noon." This was Tuesday.

Extra things! Clara nodded grimly at the other end of the 'phone. Though she might pose as homemaker, Clara was no cook, and their larder could never be called stocked. And the guest-room! Clara went in to inspect

it, Vivian on one arm. A bride would notice old things so quickly.

"Oh, Baby!" she exclaimed, setting the fat bundle on the floor. "Whatever will mother do?" Then of a sudden her glance fell on a pair of shabby little tan boots right in the middle of the rug. Snatching them up, she kissed them tenderly, thinking of the stout, shining black ones which had trudged to school. Vivian Alicia put up one fat hand to stroke her face. She never liked tears from big people. A moment after, her mother picked her up, and started resolutely to work.

The next two days were long remembered in the Rutherford family. Mrs. Dan had her household drilled into ways of neatness. Nellie, the washerwoman's daughter, had consented to assist, provided she might bring her two months' baby with her. Elmer and Claude were chased from corner to corner with their clothes, books and toys. Baby's fresh frocks were hoarded, and the mother, her expression one of strained endeavour, trotted around the little house until she had it reduced to a state of subdued expectancy. Poor Dan's pleasure in the visit was dulled by his weight of guilt in having put this load on Clara. At every turn he was made to feel that *his* relatives were expected, yet was too generous to recall the many invasions from the other side of the house. Never had there been such preparations as these, for, with her own relatives Clara had no standards to set up. She knew enough of Elizabeth's manner of life, however, to dread making the contrast with their own too marked.

"Elmer, stand still! Your garter has slipped three times. Now where is your tie?"

Claude was weaving it in and out of the coils.

"Give it to me this moment!" His mother's voice was tense with excitement. It was twenty minutes to train-time. Vivian Alicia, resplendent in her red silk dress with

lace frills, was securely fastened in her high chair, and Nellie, arrayed in bib-apron and cap, was rustling in and out of the dining-room. Everything would go well if she could once get herself dressed.

"There, boys! Now go ahead and sit on the parlor sofa. Don't stir till you hear the cab. Now remember, no spilling at luncheon."

"What's luncheon?" Elmer questioned pugnaciously. "Nellie said it was dinner."

Mrs. Rutherford was hurrying on her things. "No, *luncheon!*" she retorted. "We have dinner to-night."

"Well, she's cooking potatoes."

"Supposing she is, they're for luncheon, potato balls. Now go, boys!"

"Well, will we have them two times?" they demanded.

Mrs. Rutherford brushed up her hair wrathfully. "Go downstairs!" she commanded, then frowned at her face in the mirror, and choked back a sob. It had been such a rush!

"There's the cab!" Claude shouted. Elmer echoed the shout, and Vivian Alicia, adding her quota, struggled in her strappings with a wild effort for freedom. A cab was an event.

The combined noise awakened the two-months-old, who was tucked away on a sofa in the kitchen. So that when Elizabeth, tall and ruffly and sweet, had embraced two little Russian blouses and a red silk dress, she turned to Clara to ask after the baby, whose wails were rising higher. "I forgot you had one so young," she apologised.

"It isn't ours! It's Nellie's!" Elmer burst out. "It's asleep on the kitchen sofa while Nellie cooks the dinner—the luncheon, I mean. But we have potatoes," he added, comfortingly.

"Two times to-day," Claude supplemented.

Tom Rutherford, not knowing of Nellie's connections,

looked uncomfortable, and Mrs. Dan, to avoid revealing the whole domestic train of affairs, bustled her new sister-in-law up to the irreproachable bed-chamber, while Nellie applied herself to her maternal duty below.

"I feel very guilty in coming in on you this way, Clara," the younger Mrs. Rutherford said, turning her warm gaze on the little woman beside her. "You must *please* let us be of as little trouble as possible."

Clara's round eyes were roving over every detail of the bride's travelling suit. She quickly recalled them.

"Oh, we live very simply," she said, with an assumption of carelessness. "You must just take us as you find us."

"And so I shall be glad to do," Elizabeth assured her, bending to arrange her thick hair at the little mirror, and serenely unconscious of this scrutiny. "When our husbands are such very dear brothers we must try to be very dear sisters, must we not?"

Clara, who had been covertly examining the new Fall hat on the bed behind Elizabeth's back and mentally remodelling her own, attempted an answer. "Certainly not," she agreed. "I mean, yes, certainly. I'm always ready for another sister, though I have six of my own. When mother introduced us she used to say, 'And here's still another one, and still another one,' until she got mixed one day and said, 'And here's another still one,' and she was the very loudest. I envy your being the only daughter. You'd have some prominence. How would you like to be presented to a gentleman friend like this—'Meet Miss Atkinson. There are seven Miss Atkinsons.' "

Elizabeth's soft laugh floated out. "I'd run away," she said, "if I were the man. But you see Dan didn't. After all, there was only one Miss Atkinson for him!"

Clara laughed and blushed. It is pleasant to be chaffed

about your sweetheart days when household cares make you feel like a grandmother.

"Is this one of the sisters?" Elizabeth asked, picking up a photograph which was propped against the mirror.

A keen shaft darted from the corner of sister Clara's eyes. "That?" she said, crooking her head around Elizabeth's arm to look. "Oh, no! Tom will know who that is. That's one of his old and very particular friends. He has visited us quite a lot, you know."

Elizabeth did not satisfy her with even the faintest flush. "He will be interested in seeing it then," she said pleasantly, and put the photograph down.

Something in the girl's very poise checked further raillery. Assuming her little air of importance, Clara tucked her short arm through Elizabeth's. "Shall we go down for lunch?"

"I want to sit by Aunt Elizabeth! No, I do! No, you don't! Ma! Ma!" Elizabeth's eyes, dancing with merriment, grasped the situation in a trice.

"I want to sit by my husband! I want to sit by my husband!" she shrilled in exact imitation, and dropped into the seat assigned her between Dan and Tom. Mesmerised by this amazing young Aunt, the boys, open-mouthed, climbed into their chairs, Vivian's spoon terminating its tatoo in mid-air.

"Just wait until you grow up a husband, Elmer," his Uncle Tom argued, "and see if you don't want to sit next to your own wife."

"I'm not going to grow up a husband," Elmer returned darkly. "I'm going to grow up a Principal."

Dan, lavishly serving the viands, chuckled over the boy's ambition. "You see, it's in the family, this pedagogy." Mother Clara beamed in corroboration.

"Why in the world do you want to be a Principal, Elmer?" his uncle pursued with uncanny prescience.

Elmer wagged his head knowingly. "So's I can strap the boys," he hinted, smiling with an unholy joy.

The burst of laughter brought Nellie from the kitchen. She bowed affably to the tableful, her cap over one eye. "How d'ye do!" she said. Clara Rutherford crimsoned with mortification.

"How do you do?" Elizabeth returned sweetly. "I wonder if I might have a glass of water. My throat aches with laughing at that boy!"

The willing feet turned at once. "Sure you could!" Then, addressing Dan as head of the feast, she asked, "Will you excuse me?"

To save the situation Dan plunged the conversation *in medias res.* "How are you going to like housekeeping, you two?"

"You should say 'you one'!" Elizabeth returned. "Tom refuses to take any interest even in my drawing-room curtains."

Clara nodded shrewdly. "Just like Dan. I've been teasing him for new dining-room furniture this long time and he won't see that there's anything wrong with this."

"Neither there is," Elizabeth kindly interposed.

Tom turned to his brother. "There's none so blind—is that it, old chap? It's on the same principle that I won't look at Elizabeth's curtains, so that when they get worn I'll be able to say, 'I don't notice any difference.' All the same we've got everything cosy as can be. I'm so glad to be able to entertain the students, our own Collegiates and those from the University. I'll never forget the hospitality extended to me when I was a student. We used to get so satiated with 'refreshments' in the College and so tired of our boarding-house room, that to have the freedom of a pleasant home and a family repast was just splendid. Especially to sit by a grate-fire.

I'm so thankful we have a grate in our living-room, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth's warm smile answered his enthusiasm. "We're going to have one freshette that I know to sit by it often," she returned. "My little cousin, Miriam Campbell, from Ottawa, Clara. I expect she'll be very lonely at first."

"We must not let her be," Tom rejoined. "I only wish that we could have her stay with us, but I suppose her people wouldn't hear of it. Anyway, we have only one extra room, and I sometimes want a boy visitor. I do like boys," he continued at random and apparently unaware of two pairs of eyes fixed on him from across the table. "I wonder, Clara, whether you know of any boy who would come up to Kingston and sleep in that room? I could give him a good time, I think; take him to see the Asylum and the Royal Military College and the Penitentiary and the University. And if it were summer take him in my sail-boat, and if it were winter, ice-boating."

"I'd go, Uncle Tom!" "No, I'd go!" "No, I said it first!" "Well, I'm older'n you!"——

"Boys! Boys!" their mother admonished, while Tom and Dan threw back their heads in such shouts of laughter that they could scarcely hear Elizabeth's whole-souled reproof.

"You just drew them on, Tom! You meant to! Painting such vivid pictures of Kingston's delights! Never mind, boys, you'll get a *real* invitation from your Aunt Elizabeth the first time that mother can spare you. That room can easily hold two."

Delighted nudges from two little elbows into adjoining ribs! Fascinated smiles directed towards Aunt Elizabeth!

Clara Rutherford shook her head dubiously. "I'm afraid they'd run on you, my dear, not being used to

children. But if they'll be real good boys from now on we'll see what'll happen."

Seated on the prim sofa in the front room, half an hour later, a little "Russian blouse" on either side, Elizabeth listened with what grace she could muster to Clara's piano "execution." For Tom's sake, and for Dan's, she forced herself to smilingly endure. It can not be wondered at that she found herself giving thanks that her new sister's line of life did not follow her own exactly. Distance was not always an evil. And then one could be sisterly without opening out the secret chambers of the heart! But Tom, how he doted on his brother! And with reason. Yet with all their resemblance Tom was unique. Elizabeth smiled inwardly as she convicted herself of the age-old sin of the newlywed. And then a sudden little stifled sigh on her right hand discovered a suppressed yawn on her left, and she squeezed the brown hands sympathetically. Mother Clara was crashing her final chords and there was well-founded hope of release.

"My old music-teacher lives out West now," the plump little performer twirled around on the stool to inform her, her face crimson with tension. "I'm not keeping up my practising as I should"—manipulating pudgy fingers in proof—"but I 'took' from her for a long while. Mrs. 'Judge' Stewart she is now."

"And are these boys going to learn to play like Mother?" Elizabeth cried gaily, to avoid complications.

Claude snickered; Elmer shook his head emphatically. "I'm going to learn to play hockey!"

"As long as you don't play hookey, it's all right," his Uncle Tom returned, and at the word a train of reminiscence came moving from out the shadowy past of boyhood, completely engrossing the brothers grown. And making it almost impossible for Mother Clara to persuade the brothers ungrown that bed was the proper medium

through which to attain to age and experience. Uncle Tom's jokes and Father's stories were the centrifugal force operating away from the downy nest towards which they were lured. But long after their noisy little boots were silenced, above, Elizabeth sat entranced by this glimpse into the unknown which discovered for her her husband and explained him, as no mutual acquaintance could ever have done. How much does the proper "setting" count in placing a man! Perhaps it was a pity that their life's lines were not running parallel if these brothers meant *so much* to each other. What would she do with Sedley far away, for instance? What could she ever do? She never thought of her brother without mentally affixing his alliterative attribute—"splendid Sedley." And the picture of him, keen-eyed, swift-smiling and fervid, was followed by an impression of her cousin Miriam, with eager visitings of Nature palpable in her dark eyes. Why should she link the two with something stronger than the frail cord of relationship? Why, indeed, unless it were more than a fancy that they were joined by a spiritual bond? A bond which included her life, too, for surely this little girl was something nearer than a cousin. How to help her? How to give of the best that she had gathered, to show the more excellent way, to kindle, to restrain? With Elizabeth Rutherford the impulse to bestow was always dominant, nor was it marred by any pose of mentor. And could Miriam have but known it, a full curriculum of natural endowments and womanly virtues was available for all her college years through intercourse with Elizabeth herself.

But here was Clara down again, heated and tired, and, for the first time, able to relax. Remorseful for her isolation of spirit, Elizabeth turned to her, bending her full powers on establishing some common base, and asked about the children.

"Oh, they are the limit! I left Elmer wondering why God ever made that promise to Abraham that he should live and *multiply*—that wasn't a thing to be glad about, he said, it was far harder than addition."

"He's a son of his father," Dan Rutherford proclaimed. "I used to think that 'twain' was a kind of twilled sheeting. 'With twain he did cover his face, with twain he did cover his head, and with twain he did fly.' "

"And you used to call that an 'untidy hymn'—'We plough the fields and scatter,' " cried Tom. "Don't you remember? Oh, no, of course you don't."

"I wish you could give me some good jokes on Tom," Elizabeth said. "I'd save them to tease him with when needful."

"There never were any good jokes on me, my dear wife. I always did everything that was perfectly right and proper, even to marrying the most beautiful—oh, very well—but—everybody knows——"

The party broke up in laughing tumult and followed the children to bye-lo-land. Yet, long after the rest of the household were wrapt in slumber deep Elizabeth Rutherford lay thinking of college days. The moonlight filtering through the window made her hungry for the old stimulus and stir, the days of crowded lectures, the nights of study, and running through them all the fine threads of friendship. To feel justified in spending hours with Carlyle, Browning and such stalwarts, to know that one ought to read poetry, to be obliged to listen to inspiring lectures from master minds, surely this was making of duty a delight!

It was all over for her! Yes, over for her. And as she moved into the larger sphere of wifehood and the home, there, in the stream of new life, sweeping past her to fill the old college halls, glided Miriam Campbell, into her old place, its opportunities offered to her afresh, its experiences beckoning.

CHAPTER V: DEEP-SEARCH'D STUDY

"Study is like the heaven's glorious sun
That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks."
—*Love's Labour's Lost,* Act I, Sc. 1.

The campus was aglow with life and colour, that fine October morning. The evergreens, stretching their dark branches half-way across the narrow paths traversed by groups of students, touched the spreading boughs of the great maples in a friendly manner, as if eager to share in the general spirit of comradeship. The night's frost had decked the maples out in glowing tints and they stood resplendent against the clear sky in a last blaze of glory.

The autumn term was well under weigh. The first few weeks of intoxication had passed and the students were sobering down to a fair appreciation of the work in store for them. Yet the sprightly steps on the old gravel walks were suggestive of nothing but enthusiasm and vigour. On every side rang out gay, laughing voices. From the upper campus appeared a group of girls, discussing excitedly some debatable point on the day's work. Farther on, two young men with Greek testaments under their arms were hurrying towards Divinity Hall, past a crowd of jovial Science men assembled on the steps of their own building. The sound of the cars in the street below mingled with the strains of "Old Hundredth" already rising from the "Hall" and the yell of the Medicals,

"Oil! Wine! Whiskey! Rum!
More Ale! More Ale! More Ale!"

Pushing through a crush of men in the old Arts building, pitched to one side, jammed on the other, a tall youth

was struggling towards his locker. It was five minutes to nine and the junior Latin room was two stories up.

He reached through the crowd with his key and turned the lock. Then, at the first move, wedged himself in, abstracted his gown, threw in his cap and a couple of books, and locked it up again. The hall full of men seemed to be moving in a solid mass towards Philosophy as discoursed in the old lecture rooms of the south-east wing under the titles of Junior and Senior. Hugh Stewart tried to slip corner-wise towards the stairs but the luckless folds of his new gown some way got entangled and the first thing he knew he was straining up the stairs while half a dozen men were pulling at his tail.

He turned to remonstrate, angrily, but the grinning faces showed such delight at this, that he quickly changed his tactics. Giving one prolonged tug forward he suddenly loosened and slid his arms down, letting gown and men go tumbling back on the crowd below.

Two or three of his own year raised a venturesome shout, "Arts '03!"—"Arts '03!" which was drowned derisively by those below. Then as the bell began to fume and tinkle on the wall, the class-rooms swallowed up the last stragglers, and Hugh, clearing the second flight three steps at a time, came breathless to the dim third story even now reverberating to the clarion calls of Nickie.

"Now, gentlemen, don't jostle! There is plenty of time to walk in politely. Let the ladies pass in first, gentlemen, and don't stare at them! You've seen them often enough and you may hope to see them every day. In my time ladies weren't such a common sight in colleges as they are now. Oh, no, they were rar-re."

A very little man in professorial garb standing on the platform of the old Latin room was uttering these words in a stentorian voice, amusingly at variance with his

stature. He thundered unceasingly at the awkward squad of freshmen who pitched into the room, even while his eyes shone with friendly welcome for the shy freshettes bunched together expectantly under the sloping roof, in laughing, whispering groups. This was the beginning of a new term and the appearance of each successive class of plastic minds within the walls of that upper room whence had emerged so many "classic" medalists, never failed to inspire the grave little Professor with the joy which comes with new-discovered territory.

This junior class was easily first in his regard. Neither the Sanskrit lectures which he had the unique honor of delivering, nor the classes in final honor Latin where he so eloquently held forth, took half so firm a grasp of Professor Nicholson's affections as did this raw material which came fresh to his hand each year, from all parts of the Dominion, and beyond it.

And this affection was fully reciprocated. Every freshman class unanimously and vociferously elected him president of their year, an honour which he acknowledged by delivering an unquestionably popular lecture. And each individual freshman held as his special friend this professor who would come bookless to class rather than see a pupil in want of one, and who would often join some student on his homeward walk to give a cheering word of encouragement about the work.

"Nickie," the students called him. Disrespectful as the title might seem, it nevertheless carried with it a sense of appreciation and respect which was accorded to few in the University. For he had a way of coming very near to the minds of his class; seeing their limitations sympathetically, yet trying in his own bright, irresistible way to give them the better point of view, to open out before them further vistas of thought. His tireless zeal for begetting knowledge, his intrepid courage, and, most of all,

his never-failing kindliness and humour, evoked unceasing admiration from each new class of students. It is true that, as the year wore on, his witticisms failed to elicit that tremendous pedal applause which greeted them at the beginning of the session, but the spring term invariably found the class better able to appreciate those high, broad lines of thought which underlay even his jocular presentations.

The class was a large one this morning in late October. As yet there had been no weeding out of those occasionals who could not hope to purchase salvation in April at the cost of an endurance to the end. They were all there: scholarship men, matriculants and tutorials, crowded together, filling two-thirds of the room, while across from them the girls—"the angels," as Professor Nicholson styled them—rustled and scribbled, and cast shy glances men-ward.

"Miss Campbell?" ventured the little Professor, interrogatively, seizing on one pronounceable name from among the heterogeneous slips of paper signed by the new students.

"Present," responded a girl in the front row of seats.

"'*Adsum,*' you mean, Miss Campbell," corrected Nickie. "This is a Latin class. Kindly remember to use the scholastic rejoinder. And this I mean for *all* of you," he roared, quite unexpectedly. "You," turning suddenly to the men; "what do you mean by laughing as though *you* would have known any better? Every one of you is probably far more ignorant than this young lady!"

"Well, Miss Campbell," in softened tones, "kindly read for me, in Latin, the first few lines of your Agricola, by Tacitus, the gr-r-reat historian. The first eight lines, if you please."

Silence; then, "I haven't my text-book yet, Professor. I sent for it, but it hasn't arrived at the bookseller's."

As she spoke Miriam Campbell felt a quick movement behind her. A girl with glasses and a pale little face was thrusting forward her book, whispering, "Take mine, I can look on with some one else."

Seeing this, the professor hastily concluded his loud denunciation of tardy booksellers, and procrastinating students, to listen to the reading of the Latin which was given fearlessly enough, though punctuated with many mistakes. At the end of the eight lines he bowed his profound thanks before turning to deliver an oration to the class. What pleased him, he announced, was not so much the success of the undertaking, though that was good, very good, as the manner of complying, *and* the voice. "Gentlemen," said Nickie, impressively, thunderingly, "you would do well to imitate the style and voice of this young lady, not necessarily loud, but clear and distinct. For example, *I* don't bellow, and yet you all hear the smallest syllable to which I give utterance."

A burst of applause greeted this sally, which the professor also acknowledged. He seemed to glory in the whirlwind and tempest of acclamation under which the old Latin room rocked. Indeed, he added no small quota to the general disturbance which reigned in that upper story every morning. And if his boots had not done their best in rendering the floor unsafe from the dancer's standpoint, at least he had not been lacking in dire threats as to their powers. It had been handed down from the dark ages of college life as an established fact, that the brave little Nickie had on one occasion reduced a massive and obstreperous down-east Highlander to the verge of abject fear by his threat to "g-r-rind him to powder beneath his heel," and then to "thr-row him out of the window as you toss the caber." Such a combination of fates would have acted as a deterrent to the freshness of even a more cumbrous specimen, whose size would cer-

tainly have dwindled to nothingness before the awful sight of professorial prowess.

It was something other than courage, however, that was called for on this particular morning. The professor's patience was being sorely tried. Ever since the class began there had been a violent piano-hammering in the next room, and the shuffling sounds accompanying it plainly told of an informal dance in progress in the girls' sanctum. This was a grievance of long standing with the little Latin professor, as the girls were well aware. But they persisted in indulging themselves until a request should actually come for them to stop.

To-day the noise was unusually distracting. At first Professor Nicholson merely acknowledged it by a gallant wave of his hand toward the other room, as he murmured, "Two small feet peep in and out, like mice that fear to see the light," and then proceeded with the translation. But as the sounds increased he began to pace up and down more rapidly, urging the students to "speak up." "Be like Demosthenes, Mr. Stewart, 'he called across the tumult and it fell.'"

Volleys of applause from the Junior Latins mingled with the rattle-ty bang of the piano, and Nickie's roar of rage, as his patience and gallantry at last giving way, he strode over to the folding-doors which separated the two rooms. For one dramatic moment he waited, knuckles uplifted, his eyes gleaming merrily at the class from behind his glasses, and then he rapped, one! two! three!

There was instant silence. That annual hint was too well understood not to be respected. The girls knew that nothing short of sheer desperation would ever prompt him to put an end to what he gracefully called, "the entertaining concert by which we are daily enthralled."

Away he marched to the platform again, his gown

trailing out behind him, an air of conquering majesty in his mien, as he resumed his elaborate explanation of a knotty passage. *"Obfuscated,* is the word you mean, Mr. Stewart, the eyes of his mind were *obfuscated."* "No, that is not the subjunctive, that is a frank and open-hearted indicative. Thank you, Mr. Stewart, your translation is *most* creditable. When I want work well done I always call on the Highlanders!"

The sudden, sharp whirl of the bell announced that the Latin class for that day had ended. Nickie closed his Tacitus' Agricola reluctantly. He enjoyed each lecture to the full. They were no dry-bones of ancient date, these Latin lectures. He revelled in the life of Greece and Rome as only a classicist of the first rank could do, picturing the times and customs so vividly, with such living touches and modern instances, interspersed with quotations from Milton, Lamb or Shakespeare, that syntax retired to the background, and the classical spirit began to brood over the young minds which lay open before him.

The students filed past, hilariously, eager to laugh themselves out, in the halls.

"Stewart?"

"That's my name."

"Are you entering for the sports on University Day?"

"I hadn't thought of it."

"Aren't you going in for any of the runs?"

"No, I'm too big. I'm better at the heavy work."

"The hammer, for instance."

"Yes, the hammer, the caber and the '56,' and the shot sometimes. Well, you might put me down for the mile."

"Good!" He scribbled down the name. "I'm looking up all the sports in our year. We want the championship. Are there any other Freshie-Sophs like yourself, that might enter, do you know?" Then, another idea

popping into his head, "Do you fellows subscribe to the Journal?" he continued. "Every student ought to take it, as that excellent little manual, the handbook, remarks. Better put down your name. Only a dollar a year."

Hugh hesitated. Dollars were scarce and he knew he must retrench on every side to meet the demands. There was the gymnasium fee, the Alma Mater, the Arts Society, the Year at Home—"I'll let you know later," he temporised.

"All right!" the other man answered genially. "Now about the sports. I hope our year will put up a good fight——"

"Oh, see here!" said a voice behind. "You're surely not counting on the Sophs for anything remarkable? You know Fyfe Boulding is practically champion now."

" 'Practically' means practically nothing."

"I tell you it will simply be a walk-over for him."

"Look now," a third voice chimed in, "have any of you seen the hammer-throwing this morning?"

Hugh Stewart turned quickly. "I saw a fellow throw it yesterday 112 feet by coming around once, and he can take the double turn."

Some of the men, not so conversant with this department, were impressed. "Are you entering?" they asked.

"Sure!" said his new acquaintance easily. "Stewart is down for the shot, hammer and '56'; yes, and the caber."

"Any of the races?"

"Oh, I'm not much in those, the hop-step-and-jump, perhaps."

"Yes, he's down for the mile and half-mile."

"Well, you fellows keep your eyes open," the other man urged. "You'll see Fyfe Boulding put it all over the rest of them."

They drifted down the hall, still arguing back and

forth, their voices lost in the general commotion of the space between lectures.

From the girls' dressing-room a great hubbub arose. Girls of every age and appearance were talking, laughing and moving about from locker to table. Space was at a premium, especially in the neighbourhood of the looking-glass, for there had been a breezy walk to college. The room, at best but a box-like compartment, was soon taxed to its limit and overflowed into Paradise Alley, that part of the hall flanked by rows of lockers.

Miriam Campbell had been pushed to the wall, next another freshette. Each was holding to a blue calendar with one hand and her gown with the other, and endeavouring to catch the wisdom which flowed from the lips of a sophomore, discussing courses with an enviable repertoire of options.

To a freshette there was something positively intoxicating in the easy attitude of that sophomore. She was lolling against the wall, her black hair loosely knotted on the top of her head, her blue eyes calmly regarding some stray students who lingered in the halls for the mail-man. She had just finished inscribing her name in bold characters on the brick coping behind her, and her gown, torn in several places, hung loosely off one shoulder. Miriam, who had hers carefully pinned in place, watched with a fascinated horror as the Soph. proceeded to wipe her pen on the red braid of her gown, the while she discoursed on the various "Profs." with an astounding familiarity.

"Yes," she said airily, "Nathan is not too bad, but it is just as well to have your junior Math. off before you come to college. One man I know took eight years to get his degree, just because of it. Nathan pulled him every time. Yes, a shame, wasn't it, but the exams. are stiff. Oh, yes, I got mine off last spring. Never thought he'd let me through for I sloped so many classes. Oh,

well, I didn't do brilliantly, but what's the difference as long as you get it off? You girls ought to wait a year, though, before you tackle Junior Philosophy. The Professor doesn't like too many Freshies in his class and the essays are no joke, I can tell you. Yes, I'm taking it this year. We had a great lecture yesterday morning —'Being' and 'Becoming.' My notes are rather jumbled, I wrote so fast. The Professor has a great way of mixing you up. They say he means to do it. He furrows up your mind in the Junior so that the seed can be sown in the Senior. Goodness, that's the bell." She broke off suddenly, and commenced to pile up her books. "And there's one chap I must speak to." With that she flew down the hall, a whirlwind of black, just in time to accost the tutor in Political Economy as he came up the stairs.

"Isn't she clever?" Miriam sighed admiringly. "I don't suppose I'll *ever* be able to decide on my course."

"Oh, this is her second year. I wonder if that's a professor she's talking to. I expect so, with those smoked glasses. It must be an awful class, that Junior Philosophy. Do you know there was one man took it, who was intending to be a minister, and he lost all his faith and religion, in the lectures, and had to go into Political Science and Law. Say, what's the fun in the dressing-room? Come on in and see!"

They pushed through a knot of girls, stretching their necks to see what all the laughter was about.

The centre of the tiny room was cleared, and on it, facing each other, stood the smallest girls in the college, both freshettes. Some of the Sophs. and Juniors had arranged a novel form of amusement. One of them, more aggressive than the rest, was master of ceremonies. She waved her hand towards the two mites.

"Come on now, both of you! Take a somersault! Yes, you can! Of course!" Shouts of laughter drowned the

cries. The ludicrous command which no one seemed to take seriously convulsed the other girls.

"One! Two! Three!" called the assertive Sophomore. "Over you go, now!"

One of the small girls balked, stiffened and snorted. She'd see herself do it!

"Come on!" the others urged hilariously, hugely enjoying her indignation. She glared around the laughing ring, furious at this publicity. The laughter increased. This *was* fun.

Then, suddenly and without warning, head over heels, glasses and all, on the bare wooden floor of the dressing-room, went the other mite, amid the shouts of wonderment and admiration, and the cheers of the assembled girls.

"It's the little Jewess. It's Rachael!" some one called, and Miriam beheld a small girl with raven locks and Jewish cast of countenance, the very one who had lent her the "Tacitus," scramble up from the centre of the room, shake her gown and examine her spectacles, after this most astonishing feat.

"I forgot all about them," she remarked, "but they're never hurt a bit." She rubbed them with her gown and adjusted them over her long nose, beaming around the room with her near-sighted, dark eyes.

"Isn't she great!" one of the girls cried. "I never could do it. I never thought she would! On that bare floor!" They laughed at the sheer bravado of the girl.

The aggressive Sophomore was hugging her rapturously. "Rachael, you're all right. Take that from me! Shake hands!" She grinned delightedly at the stiff back of the stubborn defaulter who was making her way out in wrathful silence. "Rachael, you're a true sport. You'll live to be president of the Minerva. My prophetic soul forewarns me. Yes, you will."

CHAPTER VI: THE HONOURABLE STOP

"Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop
Not to outsport discretion."

—*Othello,* Act II, Sc. 3.

Light and music and flutter; good-natured jostling and smiling apologies; the fragrance of flowers, and, afar, the faint aroma of coffee; everywhere the ceaseless hum of eight hundred voices; the Freshmen's reception was in full swing.

Since seven o'clock the college doors had been opened to the guests of the evening, the new students, who trooped in dutifully, escorted by gallant seniors. The reception committee, wearing blue badges, were everywhere, encouraging, introducing and adorning each Freshette or Freshman with a white carnation.

From the far end of Convocation Hall came the sound of the orchestra, and on the platform the professors' wives who were not patronesses, together with the more elderly, city ladies and a few shy girls, had already congregated. Below, in the hall, introductions were waxing fast and furious, and the little white programs slipped from hand to hand. Soon the partners began to form for the first promenade, from Convocation Hall down to the library, through the English room and back.

On they passed in one unending line, gallant Freshmen supporting radiant Freshettes, grey-haired Professors escorting their wives' cousins, eminent divinities with sober, senior girls in the inevitable silk waists. Every seven minutes, at the sound of a trumpet, a placard, bear-

ing the number of the next promenade, would be hoisted in the hall by a heated committee-man, then rush, jam, crush, to the rendezvous, where after many vicissitudes Miss Pink Muslin would be found by Mr. White Tie, and away the new couples would march, with fresh comments on the old topics of conversation, as to the chaste colour schemes in the hall, the crowd or the selections by the orchestra.

In one corner of Convocation Hall, just out of the immediate tread of the promenaders, sat Sedley Danvers. Sedley never missed a Freshman's reception. Here was unexcelled opportunity for character-study; here was fiction, romance, philosophy. Miriam's début had afforded him unqualified entertainment. Yes, white was best for Miriam, he had said to himself, as he surveyed her critically, holding out her cloak when he had come to call for her. "You'll keep the last number for me, remember," he cautioned her, as she stepped up the wide college staircase, her eyes starlike, her cheeks warm with excitement. This was her first social function away from home. Then she had been taken over by the reception committee, and Sedley had gone strolling about, himself on the lookout for romance.

Some one's large grey eyes were watching him from behind a pillar. Between the shoulders of a knot of admirers some one had caught a glimpse of the dark head with its familiar poise, and having determined to attract his gaze, Cora Hotchkiss gave her black-lashed eyes full play. Even while she rambled lightly on, exchanging sallies and vacuous observations with those of her type, she had mentally annexed Sedley.

Gradually he drew nearer, talking with every one he met, in his large, interested way. Sedley was not concerned about filling his programme, as in by-gone college days. More for the sake of trying the new pencil than

from any need of a reminder he had scribbled Miriam's name down in the lowest corner; so far as he was concerned, Miriam was the only one in all that jostling throng. It was pleasant enough to be in the midst of the usual jollity of the familiar scholastic precincts, but the prospect of a quiet walk home through the old city park, with the little cousin whose ideas of things in general fitted in so satisfyingly with his own stirred an undertone of a deeper happiness.

Now the black-lashed, grey eyes stopped his, full and square. Dreaming of Miriam, he had wandered right into Cora's mesh. Deep rose gown, black hair, creamy throat—Cora made a fascinating picture. Many of the older and more serious college girls had looked askance at her costume in the dressing-room, as she slipped out of her evening cloak. It had seemed out of place at a reception given by the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A.

Miss Hotchkiss believed in knowledge for a man. She aspired to Sedley Danvers, learning and all. "He's awfully brainy, don't you know," she would murmur about one of her latest conquests. The brainier the victim, the better, so long as she could lead him captive. It shed something of a reflected glory upon her to be surrounded by clever men. Besides, Sedley Danvers was handsome—it didn't really matter whether a man was handsome or not; some men were so ugly that they were captivating; but still it was refreshing, once in a while, to look upon a perfect Adonis.

"Are you lost, Mr. Danvers, or were you searching for somebody? I saw your charming sister, Mrs. Rutherford, captivating one of the old fossils there"—she clapped her hand over her mouth—"oh, did anybody hear? One of the professors, I mean. She looked perfectly stunning!"

Sedley shook his head, and smiled one of his dazzling

smiles. By common consent the little group of admirers dropped away. They knew that Miss Hotchkiss preferred to hold the stage alone with a man of Danvers' symmetrical proportions. "Fossils," he repeated, "I suppose you call us lawyers prehistoric anthropologists!"

Cora gave a despairing shrug and grimace. "Don't talk of such terrible things to me, please! I felt the air in that dressing-room absolutely thick with knowledge. Those college girls have their learning sticking out all over them like burrs. It's not comfortable to go too near. It pricks."

"I thought you were going to say it *sticks.*" Sedley was beginning to enjoy the repartee.

"No, thank you! Not for me! Not that kind! It's too sure of itself. Isn't this a crush? I'm nearly wilted."

Sedley took the hint. "There's a seat over here," he said, piloting her, "on the side of the platform, where our toes won't be trodden on by those conscientious promenaders. They keep at it as relentlessly as if moving a great treadmill."

"Well, isn't it funny? There's one man that nearly convulsed me. He's got great boots like a farmer's, and his trousers are so short that you can actually see his red socks, and they *are* red, mind you."

"Probably he *is* a farmer."

"Oh, I'm sure he *must* be. He couldn't be anything else with those boots."

"Are you going to like Kingston?" Sedley asked, turning full to her.

"Oh, well, of course, it isn't Ottawa, and one misses The House, and all that, you know. But there's a rather smart set here, and there's always something going on, and I'm really so busy between one thing and another that I don't give myself time to think of Ottawa, dear old Ottawa. Dad gets positively blue for it all, some-

times. But, oh, well, what's the use? I tell him to make the best of things, and there's a jolly crowd here, too, once you get to know them."

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The endless line of promenaders was passing down and turning off and passing down again. Sedley turned his head abruptly, as a certain white dress caught his eye. Yes, there was Miriam coming, all smiles and energy, stepping away bravely by the side of a strapping, curly-headed youth, who looked as serious as though he were actually working out a problem in Conic Sections.

"And is it *Chursty Ian Bhain* you're meaning?" he was asking as they came nearer.

"Yes, I called her Christy, but that wouldn't distinguish her with so many Christies around. Does she still smoke?"

Cora Hotchkiss turned quickly. She hardly expected a question like that here. They were close by the edge of the platform, and Miriam, catching sight of her cousin, flashed him one of her inner smiles. Her face flushed the instant after when she saw Cora Hotchkiss's rose-coloured figure perched up beside him.

Sedley sent an answering smile after her ruffly white back. "Who's that she has annexed, I wonder?" he queried, leaning round the palms. "There's a good deal of him, anyway."

"Is that your kid cousin? Pauline told me she was coming to college. It's a great joke to them all at home, but I daresay she is smart."

Sedley straightened up, smiling. "She certainly is," he said, and his eyes following her around the room were so bright, that Cora Hotchkiss found it high time to change the subject.

They were going to sound the trumpet for the next promenade. In her excitement Miriam almost tripped

over Elizabeth, tall and radiant, chatting blithely with one of the tutors, while, behind her, Tom, her next partner, smilingly awaited his turn.

"Are you having a good time?" Elizabeth's eyes shone down on the younger girl. "You look as sweet as a flower," she whispered, squeezing her cousin's hand. "Whom do you have for your next promenade, dear?"

Miriam's colour rose. "Oh, you wouldn't know him," she temporised hastily. Not for worlds would she admit that her next number was a blank. Nobody at all; oh, the shame of it! Elizabeth and Tom would offer to spend it with her and she knew they wanted to go off for a chat by themselves in the cosy corner of the mathematics room. They were so very bride-and-groomy. Tom was smiling at her in his kind, intimate way, as though he knew all about the white place opposite the next promenade, where you were supposed to discuss the college yell, unless you were daring enough to bring the subject nearer home. Tom was even glancing around at the group of men who seemed to have drawn blanks, too, and would gladly have had so ruffly a freshette to pass the time with.

Miriam clenched her programme. Nobody should see the inside of that.

"Why, hullo, Miriam!" said a voice at her elbow. "I couldn't think who the stunning girl was!"

If a bevy of angels had suddenly come to her aid, Miriam could not have been more relieved. A moment before she had felt herself stranded. And here was her escort provided. In her relief the fact that it was her despised cousin Fyfe was overlooked. It was an escort that Miriam most desired at the moment. Later she might regret this temporising. But now she looked up at him so pleasantly that Elizabeth and Tom turned away unnoticed, perplexity in their smiles. They had not

thought young Boulding one of Miriam's type, related though they might be. His being a Senior was no doubt an attraction, still——

"May I have the pleasure of a number?" he was asking in his indolent way. "Perhaps you could have mercy on me for this one. I am late and consequently——" He showed his programme, blank. Fyfe Boulding in evening dress was attractive and his manner bewilderingly easy to Miriam whose sense of propriety had been hurt by the *gaucherie* of jovial youths offering to "change cards" with her, or to "write down their names on her slate." Panoplied though she was with the newly-acquired notion of those rough diamonds which University life discovered, she had nevertheless writhed inwardly when one worthy gallant, on being presented to her, queried, "Have you filled your card? Well, I have! You'd better hurry up or you'll be out of it," and passed on to exchange his pleasantries elsewhere.

Fyfe's blank card made it easy for her to say, "Why yes, I can give you this number. I have it free."

"I was born lucky," he rejoined smilingly, and offered his arm. "Can't we get out of this crowd? What do you say to a turn upstairs? It's cooler there." He skilfully piloted her through, and they were in the upper flat before Miriam could object.

The hall was dimly lighted and quite deserted, but from the room at the far end chinks of light appeared. As they came nearer a faint sound of music could be heard, but it was muffled by the movement inside. At the signal of a double rap, given by her cousin, the door was cautiously opened.

It was the old Minerva room, the special retreat of the lady students. Miriam had already made the acquaintance of its dim, inviting quarters under the slanting roof, with its little dormer-windows looking far down over the tree-

tops to the deep blue of the lake. Many an afternoon she had shut herself in here, away from the lonesomeness of the sunshine, in with the tattered magazines on the old haircloth settle.

To-night the room was transformed. Curtains were hung across the windows; the piano, dragged to one side, was tinkling merrily, and over the old matting went the flying feet of a score of dancers. The girls she hardly knew; most of them were city girls, there by special invitation. The men were strangers to her.

Miriam turned to her escort in stupefaction. "Why, I—don't understand. I thought they didn't allow dancing at the Freshman's reception. Isn't it given by the Y. M. C. A.?" she blurted out.

Fyfe checked a quick laugh. "Not downstairs," answering her first question. "We would be in the way of the active promenaders. But some of the dancing-fellows thought this would be a nice, quiet place. It's an abominable floor, but we might try a round. You dance, of course?"

"Oh, yes," Miriam said hastily; "I like dancing." But as she spoke the old dislike of this cousin seized her. He had brought her here in a rather underhand way. She hesitated, flushing and frowning. Fyfe glanced from her bright cheeks to her slim, white figure and down to the slippers tapping time on the old drugget. College was certainly bringing her on. She wasn't half bad-looking. He was eager to be off.

In the midst of the gayest of music, charmed by the catchy movement, the men were emphasising their approval with their feet, not realising how much they were increasing a noise which should have been repressed. They were carried away by the enjoyment of the dance and kept up their applause, until suddenly a thundering knock on the door startled every one into silence.

In a moment it was repeated and the voice of the Y. M. C. A. president demanded that the door be opened at once.

Still no response. Then came the order, "All right, fellows, break it in!" and a fusillade of thrusts and kicks, a storm of rushing, wrenching body-blows began. The girls huddled together by the dormer windows laughing nervously. The men piled chairs up against the door. Then four or five rushed to drag the piano forward to strengthen the barricade. But before they could push it to place, in fell the door with a mighty crash, a score of men with it.

The dancers started forward to crowd out the others, but the onrush of the invaders was so determined that the opposing parties closed a plain hand-to-hand fight. Back and forth they wrestled. Their smothered expletives mingled with hurried shouts from without. Belated warriors, breathing out threatenings, were dashing down the hall. On to the scene of battle! The girls, horrified at the outcome of the affair, crowded back farther into the room, some of them on the verge of hysteria.

Fyfe Boulding was the first to break away. That look of misery on Miriam's face!—"I say, you fellows, cut it out! We'll settle this later. Let the ladies go downstairs."

At the word an aisle was cleared among the débris and, though some of the fighters were loth to desist, the temporary lull in hostilities enabled the girls to escape to the halls. The stairs were blocked with people who had gathered at the noise of conflict, and it was with some difficulty that they could make their way through. The whisper ran along that these were the dancers and every one pushed back, watching them curiously, and murmuring their names as they filed down.

Miriam was one of the last to appear. She was sick at heart and miserably aware of the publicity. The whole

affair had been so sudden that it still seemed a bad dream, and the deceit practised upon her added nothing to her self-exoneration.

At the bottom of the stairs stood a group of men, scrutinising the girls. When Miriam appeared, they seemed puzzled. She was new in the college. As for Miriam, she would rather have faced fire than have passed through that group. But no escape! And there was Hughie Stewart. Well, the Cape Breton people would hear of it. She dropped her eyes and turned her head aside as she passed close by him.

One of her own year girls greeted her from the door of Convocation Hall in round-eyed, virtuous amazement. "Were *you* in that bunch, Miriam Campbell?"

Miriam stepped past without answering. She knew they looked after her, that there were Seniors among them, that she would be marked from this time. Far better to have sat out that number all alone in the deserted *rendezvous!*

Hot of heart, sore with shame, the girl sped down the wide staircase, through the quiet halls, and into the big dressing-room, shrouded with wraps. First her long coat, then her scarf, adjusted with shaking fingers. To escape before this next number with Sedley! Out she hurried, into the hall. There was some one coming down the stairs. Had he seen her? Yes, he was beside her as she reached the door, and pulled it open. Outside a cab or two were standing, the drivers tramping up and down together, in the frosty, Autumn night. The carriage lamps sent long streaks of yellow light down through the evergreens of the campus, but beyond them there was darkness.

"Where were you going?" Sedley asked her, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets and facing round at her.

"Home. I mean to the boarding-house."

"All alone? Without telling me?"

Miriam nodded.

They walked on in silence. The little board walk wound down through the trees. At the end there was the campus gate, and the great arc light swinging above at the crossing.

He took a full look at her as they passed underneath. "I was promising myself this time with you all evening, Miriam," he said reproachfully. "It would have been a keen disappointment to have found you gone."

"I was dancing. I mean I was just going to," Miriam burst out, unable longer to withstand. "Fyfe Boulding took me up, but I never knew what was going on."

"I saw you," Sedley answered. "I'm glad you didn't dance with him. The row came just in time."

"I can't stand him! I don't care if he is a cousin!" she stormed.

"Certainly you don't care," he soothed her. "Cousins are always a rock of offence, created to be railed at, and run away from."

The sudden relief which surged in her heart broke down her reserve. "This is our number, anyway, Sedley, the end of it," she said demurely.

He threw back his head and laughed. "That was why you were hurrying so, was it? You were rushing out into the darkness to find me. You thought I must be putting in time with the trees in the campus until it came off." He laughed repeatedly.

"You might not have been worse off with the trees," she retorted. "There's some stability about them anyway."

He laughed harder than ever at that. Miriam, spiteful, was a fresh treat for him. Besides, he enjoyed her little show of pique towards Cora.

"I think I saw you promenading with an oak tree,

Miriam," he said wickedly. "Or was that a Douglas fir? There was quite a bunch of foliage at the top!"

Miriam laughed softly, her resentment forgotten. "It *is* too thick, isn't it? Most of the boys in Cape Breton are like that. They seem to have more curls than they know what to do with. Do you think he is good-looking, Sedley?"

"Undoubtedly. And he'll be better-looking every year; and college always helps a chap of that type. Brings the best out of him."

Miriam mused over this in silence. They were turning up her own street now, quite deserted, and so quiet after the fitful fever of the crowd.

"I wish Hugh Stewart could talk," she said irrelevantly.

"Doesn't he?"

"Oh, but so slowly and meaning every word. I like something smart and brisk."

"Address him in Gaelic," her cousin suggested.

"My Gaelic seems to amuse him vastly," she rejoined, disquieted at the remembrance. "Sedley, what does *'laoch mu cridhe'* (darling of my heart) mean? Isn't it, 'I'm shivering like a calf' (*laogh air crith*)? I said that to Hugh to-night in the cold Mathematics room, and he looked at me so queerly. Then I translated it for him, and he just shouted with laughter and kept making me say it over and over."

CHAPTER VII: TILL IT BE MORROW

> "Good night, good night: parting is such sweet sorrow,
> Then I shall say good night till it be morrow."
> *Romeo and Juliet,* Act II, Sc. 2.

Sedley laughed to himself as he walked down the street. He had an inkling of Gaelic, just sufficient to recognise that Miriam had compromised herself with the ingenuous Celt. Not so ingenuous, either, judging by the way he had capitalised her linguistic *faux pas.* And then the picture he had drawn of her cavalier was really capital. A Douglas fir! Actually it was exactly like him. What did a man want with so much hair, anyway! Sedley sauntered down through the park, hands deep in his pockets, head thrown back, and throat vibrating with laughter. The stars winked at him through the branches. Had the promenading gone to his head? Promenading! The poor youngsters! And their slippers bewitched so that they could scarcely control them. They were for flying off with the owners, whether or no, just like the fairy-tale of the red shoes, which danced the girl to the mischief and all, once she had donned them. Those promenades were only provocative, in any case.

Poor Miriam led into evil by the facile Fyfe Boulding! Sedley knew him well. Hadn't his first case caught Boulding in its dragnet along with a score of other college sports? A man couldn't live on his sinews forever, any more than on his fat, and it was one thing to pole-vault yourself into public notice, and another to keep steady enough to hold it. Miriam did not begin to know him,

cousin though he was. Of course, Boulding was the very type of man to covet the acquaintance of smooth brown heads and trusting eyes. Well, she would have to make her own distinctions now, away from Aunt Campbell and home uniformities. And a mighty good thing for her! Sedley smiled grimly in the darkness. A mighty good thing!

"Hullo! Where do you think you're going?" He brought up suddenly with the bump which the other man gave him.

"Oh, that's too bad!" said Hugh Stewart, straightening himself contritely and rubbing his own forehead. "I wasn't seeing where I was going!"

Sedley threw back his head and laughed immoderately. "Nor caring either, I guess! You college fellows are just the same as in my day—plunging off for a walk to rest your nerves and leaving the poor girls to find their own way home." Then, on a friendly impulse holding out his hand—"Excuse the irregularity of the introduction—Danvers is my name—you know a cousin of mine —Miriam Campbell. And aren't you Mr. Stewart?"

Hugh shook hands heartily. He was lonely, the festive scene now over, and this friendly meeting touched a responsive chord in his warm nature.

"How do you do?" he said readily, and industriously got into step with the other man, as they walked through the park. "I'm after knowing Miss Campbell since last Summer. And will she be your cousin?"

"She both will be and is," Sedley returned, unable to resist poking fun. "Well, if you've known her only since last Summer, your pleasures are before you."

"Is that so?" Hugh revolved this in his mind a brief space. Finally, and with some effort, he brought out what was worrying him.

"And will the ladies be waiting for us then?" he asked

diffidently. "Will your cousin be looking——" he glanced anxiously towards the far-off lights of the college twinkling through the trees.

"Oh, Miriam's safe in her nest by this time," Sedley assured him. "I saw to that myself. I couldn't trust her to any one else." Then, fancying the other man hurt, he hastened to add, "We're great chums, even if we are related. My people come from Cape Breton, Mr. Stewart; all my mother's people. She was a Campbell."

The bars were down now. The clan spirit had done its work. It had set these two men, contrasts as they were, on the same road.

Before they knew it they were striking out King Street, following the winding sidewalk, past old factories and dwelling-houses into the further gloom of the night, the great lake their mysterious, unbidden companion all the way. Through the darkness it seemed like some wide expanse inviting exploration, and enlarging instead of limiting their road. Sedley's face turned constantly to it as he talked. "It fascinates me, that lake," he said, suddenly interrupting his own reminiscences of Nova Scotia. "It seems to be calling to me and then warning me back. Are you ever visited by such portents?"

Hugh turned earnestly toward the older man. Recollections of boyish terrors on lonely glens, of dread of fire-balls and evil spirits chased through his mind. He remembered the story of his grandfather wrestling with what he believed to be the evil one—a neighbour dressed in character. And the more the neighbour would shout, "It's I, Alastair!" the more Alastair, firm in his belief as to the identity of the *"donas"* (devil), would shout back, "I know it's you!" and belabour him the more.

All this would have been a rich treat for Sedley, romantic and mystical as his Celtic forefathers. But to Hugh it was so much superstition to be shaken off as soon as

possible. He was still too near boyhood days to see in perspective their dramatic charm. Besides, he was diffident in the society of the other man whom he knew as a brilliant graduate and promising lawyer. And so there drifted past one of those chances of rare intercourse which a man so often misses through reticence or obtuseness.

Instead, he answered plainly, "There's a lake I'm after seeing every day at home. It's an awful pretty lake, the big Bras d'Or."

"But you brought yourself to leave it?" Sedley encouraged. He was curious to discover the mainspring in the young man's character.

"Oh, well, yes," was the answer given in a matter-of-fact and quiet tone. "I was always meaning to go to college. My uncle was always saying I would take after him."

"He's a minister," Sedley supplemented, as a matter of course. Most of these Highland Scotch boys had that as their great objective.

"Well, no," said Hugh, apologetically. He shared his people's reverence for the office of a minister. "He's after being a judge."

"That's interesting," was Sedley's comment. "Sydney, did you say?"

"Well, no," said Hugh, once more reluctant. That certainly was the centre of the universe. Would any one be familiar with this other place? "He's in Regina," he brought up bravely.

"Regina," the other man repeated, as who would say, what took him to such an outlandish spot? Aloud he said, "I've taught near there. It's on the flattest side of the pancake. No trees, no lake, no real one I mean, just prairie. Whatever made them choose such a spot for congregating human souls and bringing up little children

passes my knowledge. Oh, yes, I know they're trying to fix it up, plant trees and all that, and it will be better with time, but why not take what Nature offers ready-made? We have such beauty spots all about us. Just look!"

They had stopped on the hill overlooking Portsmouth and the grey bulk of the Penitentiary buildings loomed out of the darkness ahead. But his guide pointed Hugh beyond these, up past the clustering houses and the little church, to the hill and then away out across the water.

"It's great!" said Hugh enthusiastically. He drew a deep breath and squared his big shoulders. The arc light swinging above them showed his features as if chiselled. Sedley's quick eye caught the beauty of the man and included him in the whole prospect.

"You've seen finer sights in Cape Breton, no doubt," Sedley remarked, suggestively.

"Oh, well, yes," Hugh returned. The fact was too patent for elucidation.

"The scenery is very much like that of the Scottish Highlands," Sedley suggested.

"I've been hearing so. I never was there."

"Densely-wooded mountains where a man might easily be lost, and a prey to wild animals, even near his own home? Is that an exaggeration?"

"Well, no, indeed it is not. It's true enough," Hugh returned, roused at last. "You would have heard of the Reverend Roderick MacKenzie, the minister we had before Reverend John Farquharson. He was awful proud of his shooting. Well, one day he went out to the mountain back of the manse after partridge. And when he did not return at dark Mistress MacKenzie became apprehensive."—Hugh's book-English was delightful to the other man. "She informed the neighbours and we got up

a search party and looked all night and never found him."

"He was lost!" Sedley exclaimed.

"Oh, well, no, we found him two days after. He was following the stream down to Trout Brook."

"Following the stream?"

"Yes, just so. Well, but he was the tired man!"

"And the thankful man, I'll warrant!"

"Indeed then, he was not thankful. He was very angry."

"Angry? Why in the name of creation should the man be angry?"

"Oh, well, he did not want us to find him lost."

"Oh, I see!" Light was dawning for Sedley on the mysteries of the Highland pride. "Like the Indian found by the scouting party. He would never admit his desperation—'Indian not lost, wigwam lost.' It would be, 'Minister not lost, manse lost.' " He threw back his head in a peal of laughter.

"But,"—recovering himself quickly lest any part be missed—"what would he say when you came on him? Did he look spent? Played out, I mean? How did you find him? Did he see you coming?"

"Well, no, he heard us."

"Hallooing, do you mean?"

"Oh, well, yes, shouting and yelling and blowing the cow-horns and beating the pans."

"My conscience, what a band! And he didn't like it, you say?"

"No. We called, 'Is that you, then, Mr. MacKenzie?' He was sitting on a fallen tree by the stream, bathing his feet, his gun beside him and a partridge with it. He looked up just as dark as thunder."

" 'And who were you thinking to see?' he said.

" 'Maybe just the bear,' one of the boys told him, cross

at the proud and spiteful way of him, after all our searching and tramping—'And Mistress MacKenzie is disappointed at your not returning and she has gone out of her mind.' "

"You'd have thought that would have fetched him," Sedley hazarded, quite aware of the customary exaggeration.

"Well then, yes, wouldn't you? But it didn't!" said Hugh wrathfully. "He was angrier than ever, I do believe. He was angry at her for doing it and he was angry at us for finding him, and he was angry at the woods for being in his way!"

Sedley went off in another volley of laughter. "The only one he was reconciled to at that rate would be the little partridge. It would serve as a peace offering to his demented wife."

"Indeed, then, she never got it, the creature! The boys just took it. They auctioned it at the pie social. It was a bird whatever."

"I suppose you could hardly call it a 'bag,' " Sedley mused, playing with the fancy in evident delight. "It served as a link, anyway, between minister and people."

"There was no link possible," said Hugh shrewdly. "It was not until the Reverend John Farquharson came to us that we knew happiness."

"Did he have the Gaelic, too?" Sedley put the question largely to show that he knew the proper form. The uninitiated would have said, "Did he *know* Gaelic?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, but we would have loved him, whatever. Twice every week I went to the manse for lessons in Latin and Greek. I was teaching the school and I was preparing for college, and it was he who made it possible for me at all."

"I often wondered how so many of the boys found their way up here from Nova Scotia."

"We only followed Geordie."

"You knew Principal Grant, then, before you came."

"We used to see him in Cape Breton in the summer. He preached great sermons. We all wanted to go to 'Big Grant's' college."

Sedley reviewed this in silence. He seemed to see the little church as he had known it in boyhood days, long and bare, to feel himself in those uncomfortable pews again, to catch a whiff of fragrant summer breeze through the open door. And then he pictured on that bald platform the arresting figure, the compelling gaze, the ringing tones. Who would not follow thee, bonny Prince Charlie?

"I must turn down here," said Hugh.

Sedley started and looked about him, pulled out his watch and started again. Then held out his hand.

"Will you accept my thanks for one of the most delightful midnight rambles a man could conceive of?" he asked, his radiant smile dazzling Hugh even in the uncertain light of the incandescent swinging above them.

"I have enjoyed it, too," Hugh answered simply.

CHAPTER VIII: FORTUNE'S THREATENING EYE

"When Fortune means to men most good
She looks upon them with a threatening eye."
—*King John,* Act III, Sc. 4.

"On the old Ontario strand, my boys,
Where Queen's forever more shall stand.
For has she not stood
Since the time of the flood
On the old Ontario strand."

The grand stand was filling rapidly. Every moment new hats appeared above the turn of the steep little staircase, sometimes alone, sometimes escorted by those of the male persuasion. As the owners walked along the front of the stand, expectantly eyeing the serried ranks above to discover a possible gap, they were gaily hailed by cronies to right and left. No man accompanying a girl went unheralded.

"So now I'm in the city
Where the girls are so pretty."

the students chanted, or, becoming personal, "That's right, Tommy," "Good boy, enjoying yourself? Don't blush!" Spirited was the girl and heroic the temper of the man who could brave such sallies.

And now from the bleachers rises the old slogan, *"Oil thigh na Banrighinn gu brath!"* and out on the green oval below file the competitors, scant as to garments, but muscular as to legs and arms, which protrude

from the protecting coat thrown over jersey and trunk hose, as who should say, "Here's where we come in!"

There is a little knot of trainers and starters and special friends mixed up with the athletes, together with two or three of the younger and more vigorous professors. And they all stand around talking and examining their watches and measuring the ground and talking again, until with the sultriness, and the new fall suits and the flight of time, every one begins to fidget. The programme of events has been read half a dozen times and all the advertisements mixed up with it, when at last, at last, the first number is called off.

"Who's that in the old rose running-suit?" Miriam Campbell, in a group of girls, laughed as she put the question, for the garments were so ridiculously abbreviated and the legs *so* skinny.

"Fyfe Boulding," said some one, importantly. "Isn't he perfectly splendid?"

"He's horribly thin," said another. "I should think he'd be ashamed of his life!"

"Of his legs in any case."

But evidently he wasn't, for he proceeded to flourish those lanky extremities in a sort of twinkling caper, partly for exercise, partly from sheer exuberance of spirits. It needed but this to rouse the enthusiasm of his supporters.

"What's the matter with Fyfe Boulding?" they vigorously chorused.

"Matter enough with those legs," murmured the cynical girl, while the bleachers gave back the frenzied assurance,

"He's all right!"

Miriam's face was hot. Fyfe Boulding! She had not seen him since the night of the Freshman's reception. The fiasco in the Minerva room had been the sensation

of a college week. There was talk of courting the delinquents and forcing them to foot the bills for damages which the Senate had levied on the student body. Relations were strained between those who belonged to the Y. M. C. A. and those who did not. The girls came in for a liberal share of censure, especially those city girls who were accused of trying to run things. Miriam's case was something of an anomaly. Apparently she was a studious individual with little idea of insurrection. The general conclusion was that she had been led, but no one seemed to know just by whom.

Miriam was supremely thankful. She made no comment when his name was mentioned, but she followed the figure in the old-rose running suit keenly.

The men were lining up for the mile run, half a dozen or more. They toed the line, straightened their legs, then crouched.

"Bing!" went the gun. Away and away they sped. Round after round.

"Boulding!" the shout rose triumphantly. "Fyfe Boulding!" He is not leading, but neck to neck with another.

"Boulding!" "Boulding!" He has reached the line—but second. The cheer wavers, dies, is renewed, but this time a new name strikes the ear. "Stewart!" "Stewart!"

The Sophomores are doubling up and down, yelling. The Freshmen are hurrahing. There is a furious flutter of yards of college ribbons from the Freshette bunch in the grand-stand. Hugh Stewart is striding back, flushed with victory. He is as much surprised as the rest and laughs when one of the men claps him on the shoulders. Boulding, in a crowd of subdued supporters, saunters after. He can afford to let the youngster puff himself a little.

They are gathering for the next event, throwing the

discus. Stewart is entering this, too. The men regard him with interest. These new fellows have possibilities. Then of a sudden they have spied their old favourite, a Lanark stalwart. He swings on to the green like a Highland chief, treading the heather with the easy stride of a victor, while the students chant their old-time ditty,

"He came—from Lanark,
Won fame—for Lanark.
Great game! Great name!
Lanark!"

"He's sure of the championship," said one of the men behind Miriam.

"All nonsense!" another rejoined. "Fyfe Boulding will make a clean sweep. He may be strong on the heavy work but Boulding is all-round."

"Good shot! Good shot!" the cry rang out below. Lanark's hero had made the first throw.

"There's Stewart of the Freshmen year," cried somebody. "He puts up a stiff fight."

Miriam leaned out to watch him throw. A good many eyes followed hers. The tall figure crowned with a handsome head, and the whole-souled interest he showed in each event, his unbridled enthusiasm and native grace won for Hugh Stewart a host of new friends. Miriam's thoughts went back to Trout Brook. How cool it would be there this Indian Summer afternoon! How pleasant to sit lazily under the alder bushes and watch Hughie land the trout! She laughed as she noticed how Hughie was included in her picture. He seemed to fit into and round out the scene. She was not alone in her admiration. All the girls around were watching him. The Lanark hero was scoring as far as mere shot-putting was concerned, but Hugh Stewart's score stood high in another direction.

Lanark for the final try. He steps into the seven-foot circle and with his left arm extended makes two or three threatening swings with his right, as if having designs on the grand-stand, the discus gripped firm in his tensely-stretched fingers. Then, like a whirling Dervish, he spins around in the circle, and with the momentum gained, enhanced by his last ounce of strength as a parting gift, flings it forward. The discus cuts horizontally through the air and, gliding along the path of least resistance, lands a hundred and twelve feet from the point of departure, lying spent where it struck.

The students go wild. There come cheering, shouts, caps are waved and out rolls the old rhetorical question,

"What's the matter with Lanark?"

"That's a record-breaker," said one of the men, leaning down from behind. "He scores five points by that, you know. Fyfe will have to look up. Stewart is second."

The girl below nodded, smiling. "I wouldn't have had him make an inch less. He looked so set on it, and he spun around so fast."

It is the half-mile race now. Hugh Stewart and Fyfe Boulding are again to the fore. Lining up—"Are you ready?"—Click!—Flying feet—on and on.—"Boulding!" "Boulding!" "Good boy, Boulding!"—"Keep it up, Stewart!"—"That's right!" "Keep it up!" "You've got it, Stewart!" No, Fyfe Boulding has it with Hugh a good second. And again the cheers ring out.

The afternoon is wearing on. The Lanark hero and Fyfe Boulding have not carried all before them. Hugh Stewart is running Boulding hard for all-round honours.

"The Freshmen are putting up a good fight. Look at Stewart there! See the length of his step? That's magnificent! Boulding managed the hop all right but his step was too short. Man, what a jump! The fellow's made

of India rubber. Boulding again! That's better, better! Pretty work! Pretty work! Now, Stewart! Good! Good! Splendid! He's made it! Stewart!"

Hugh's last jump had landed him clean beyond the marks of his two rivals.

For the first time Hugh hears his own name figuring in that famous query, "What's the matter——" It swells up and soars aloft in the still, Autumn afternoon, drowned by a derisive, answering cry from the Senior men.

> Freshmen, Freshmen, verdant green,
> Tell me what you've heard and seen?
> Nothing heard and seen still less,
> Very verdant, I confess.

It is the hurdle-race, the last decisive event.

"Have you entered for this, Stewart?" One of the officials lays a hand across his shoulders.

"No, I'm sorry I didn't."

"Have a try in any case. You're not winded?"

"No! I'm as fit as ever."

"In with you then. Show them a thing." He slaps him on the shoulders.

It is an exciting event. Those who have scored on the runs and those whose forte has been the jump are now faced with combination work in these two lines. Boulding, Stewart and two or three others are ready for the start. Every one leans forward expectantly. The grand-stand has thinned out a little, but those remaining are keenly intent. The championship depends on this last race. Now ready, boys, steady!

Suddenly a new note is struck. The students are rising in a body. Some one who has just returned from an ocean voyage in search of fleeting health is seen far down the green. Miriam, keyed up for the last essay, feels a

thrill, a tremor, an indescribable flood of loyalty sweep through her heart, as that body of sound swells out,

"Rule, rule, Geordie!
Geordie rules the boys.
Oh, what a happy man is Geordie!"

A tall figure, accompanied by one of the professors, is slowly approaching. Grey-haired, keen-eyed, scholarly, his quick, penetrating glance falls here and there, noting each student on the way, speaking to him by name, the while he bends his head to listen closely to what his companion is saying. His left hand is drawn through his friend's. On his right there is a glove.

The Principal! Hugh Stewart, his muscles taut with strain, shakes in his running shoes. Is Geordie to witness his efforts? Indeed, the Principal has no intention of marring the contest. No one is more keenly interested in sport than he. He steps aside quietly, and the signal is given.

"That's right, Boulding!" "Over with you!" "Stewart!" "Stewart!" Stretch yourself!" Come on now!" "Good boy!" "Make it!" "Make it!" "That's the style!" "Boulding!" "Boulding!" "Now, Glengarry, remember the fences at home!" "Good practice!" "That's right!" "Over you go!"

But the Glengarry man's early training has not stood him in good stead. In some way or other his foot catches on the hurdle, he trips, stumbles, pitches headlong. Boulding, on his heels, meets the same fate and lands in an ignominious heap two yards behind him.

Stewart, who had been a close third to these leaders, takes the hurdle without mishap, the next, the next, and amid the wild shouts, hurrahs and cheers of the grandstand, reaches the goal first man.

His supporters are enthusiastic. Stewart stands first

for the championship. The glory and praise of it all come to the Sophomore year.

Then arise doubtful shakings of the head and wise reckonings on the part of officials and the airing of certain iron rules, and it presently develops that Hugh's victory in the hurdle-race is not allowed. The men who fell must be given another chance. The race is to be run over. Hugh refuses to be one of the competitors. He has won the race already. He has succeeded in keeping on his feet while the others have fallen. The victory is fairly his. This event calls for ability to jump with ability to run. The fact that his opponents did not clear the hurdles but "fell i' the other," is not an accident but a failure on one of the two tests involved in this particular contest. They were slightly faster than Hugh, but in their eagerness to arrive they o'er-leaped themselves. No, he will not enter a second time. So, without him, they line up, and, rendered wary by previous experiences, come bravely through, Boulding leading, two points more for Boulding. But he has broken no record and Stewart has the championship by one point.

More cogitation, rumination, investigation, and in due course it comes to light that although Hugh Stewart has actually won the greatest number of points, he is not allowed them all because, as Boulding shows the judges, he had not entered in advance for all the events in which he competed. Reckoning thus, they conclude that the champion of the day is Fyfe Boulding. Fyfe Boulding! In no time he is hoisted on the shoulders of the crowd and all the Seniors gather around and yell themselves hoarse in praise of him and their year.

"For he's a jolly good fellow
And his name is Boulding Fyfe!"

It was a bitter moment for Hugh. Had his achievements been less of a surprise it would have been easier to stand the disappointment. But victory had come so swift-winged that the defeat was hard to bear. He felt the injustice of it all. To deprive him of his rights on a mere technicality, the fact of not entering before, was hard enough. But to lose the hurdle-race to those who had stumbled when he had been nimble enough to keep his balance was outrageous. He stood alone at the side of a yelling crowd, trying to curb his anger, while Boulding's supporters bore him aloft to the waiting bus, still shouting his praises.

"You're champion, all the same, Stewart," said one of his year men, as he came into the dressing-room. "Look here, we'll contest, all right."

"It's certainly not fair." Hugh was getting out of his running-boots.

"Don't you forget it, Stewart, you're first man." Another man poked his head in at the door. He bore no love to Fyfe Boulding. "The Sophs. are up on their ear. There'll be wigs on the green. That '98 row——"

"Come on, Hugh," said the first fellow, in no mood for reminiscences. "We'll join the crowd. Man, you've nothing to be ashamed of."

Hugh hesitated a moment. His inclination was to make his own way home, independent of any of the students. The bus, specially chartered for the competitors, was drawn up at one side, and already those within were calling to him to hurry. The sight of Fyfe, enthroned and jubilant, was galling to his sense of justice.

"Come on, Stewart!" "Here's a place, Hugh!" "Hurry up!" The cries and calls from the men were so friendly and insistent that Hugh put a strong face on the uncomfortable situation and, assuming as sportsmanlike an attitude as he could muster, jumped in with the rest.

The last of the onlookers were leaving the grand-stand. The tiers of empty seats gaped down on the abandoned green below. The gentle stillness of late afternoon was gathering in the fields around. The songs and shouts of the departing competitors mellowed in the distance. Away down the street in a flood of sunset, stretched a long, gay line of students with floating streamers and rhythmic step, following the triumphal car.

CHAPTER IX: BETTER ACQUAINTANCE

> "If there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we have more occasion to know one another."
> —*Merrie Wives of Windsor,* Act I, Sc. 1.

A flood of sunlight from the western windows of old Convocation Hall streamed over the bowed heads of the students, touching with tender grace the portraits of those bygone teachers, which hung around the walls, as though illuminating their faces with something of that light which they had striven to diffuse in their little day of life.

The hall and gallery were filled, and on the platform the crowd of gowned and hooded professors was augmented by many city dignitaries, for the University sermons were of a high order and the academic flavour of the service always made its successful appeal. There was, moreover, to the serious-minded student, an unfailing attraction in a gathering so distinctly devotional, and when the organ sounded the first note of the grand old hymn, menacing, fervent,

> "God the All-terrible, King who ordainest
> Thunder thy chariot and lightning thy sword,"

every drop of martial blood from any remote ancestor leaped to the challenge, and the students, rising, faced their professors in common enthusiasm and together rolled out the stirring words, ending with that great cry,

> "Give to us peace in our time, O Lord."

The sound floated out across the campus where the snow lay in clean drifts under the evergreen boughs, and the steady blue of the sky and icy stretch of lake were wrapped in winter stillness.

Sermon followed the singing, and who could resist the appeal of the speaker to man's inherent nobility? A summons it was to latent worth, a call to action, a challenge to the slumbering soul of goodness. As the ringing, clear-cut words came hot from the speaker's heart, deep answered unto deep and many a soul was born anew to high endeavour.

Far back in one of the side seats, his sinewy arm stretched out along the bench, sat Fyfe Boulding. He had chosen this seat because it was exactly on a line diagonally with a girl in brown, whose brown furs matched her hair. If Miriam Campbell were following the sermon, Fyfe Boulding was following the outline of her face as she listened.

He told himself that she despised him. He had involved her in that stupid dance. Few would gather from his easy attitude how much this troubled him. Privately, he craved this cousin's esteem. Her very dissimilarity to his own people had a curious fascination for him. Her directness, her candour, her set standards attracted the *dilettante* in his nature, and this in inverse ratio to her indifference.

They were singing the closing hymn now. Fyfe hardly knew that the speaker had finished, until he found himself joining in with those hundreds of strong voices,—

"Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest."

It seemed in strange contrast to the weather outside, he thought, as he bent his head for the benediction. His own prayer was a vague wish that the fates might make it possible for him to walk home with Miriam Campbell.

There were crowds in the way at first. They lessened at the campus gate, and at Artz Street she turned down. She must be going out to tea. Fyfe waved a hasty greeting to some friends who would have stopped him, and plunged through a snow-drift in pursuit.

She turned and nodded in recognition, but without slackening her speed. So that Fyfe had to double his strides to overtake her.

"You're a pretty good sprinter, Miriam. Is this a constitutional?"

Miriam laughed and fell into a more reasonable gait. "I'm going to my cousin's for tea," she explained. "She lives out on King Street. But you probably know that."

Fyfe reflected how seldom she spoke of their own relationship, but he only said, "On the other side of Portsmouth?" for the girl was quickening her steps again.

"Oh, no, not so far as that," Miriam corrected, soberly. But she still hurried on.

"Perhaps I should not be troubling you with my company," he suggested. "I don't know whether you have forgiven me for getting you into that unfortunate mix-up at the Freshman's reception." He glanced at her as he spoke.

Her flush deepened. No, she had not forgiven him. Would it be the honest way to say so, since he had asked? She could not bring herself to do it.

"It was very rough and—unpleasant," she stammered.

"Oh, extremely so," Fyfe conceded, immensely relieved by her lenient judgment. "They seemed to lose their heads altogether,"—gently slipping the blame on the righteous hosts of the evening,—"and to ignore the presence of the ladies entirely. I was more than sorry to have subjected you to it."

His bluster of concern went far to soothe Miriam's grievance. She began to see Fyfe as one placed in an

awkward situation and only disturbed by the fact that he had involved her in it. Her attitude softened.

And then of a sudden there appeared Sedley and Cora Hotchkiss, round a bend in the street just before them, laughing and chatting gaily and so completely absorbed in each other that for a moment they did not see whom they were meeting. Sedley stopped and the rest must perforce follow suit.

Cora was all nonchalant grace. She touched Miriam's fingers with a high, light pressure and nodded airily to Fyfe.

"You're going to Elizabeth's?" Sedley said quickly. "That's good. And to church?"

"If Elizabeth goes. She generally does."

"Well, perhaps I'll see you there." He glanced away, uncertainly, without looking at Cora.

"Don't count on him," Cora smiled slowly down on her. "He's coming to tea with us and he'll never get away for church at that impossible hour, what is it? Seven?"

A slight shade gathered over Sedley's eyes but he quietly let it smooth away when he saw that tell-tale flush creep up Miriam's cheeks. How had she picked up Fyfe Boulding, he wondered, or was his presence unwelcome?

Cora tapped her foot impatiently. "I'm positively rigid, Sedley," she complained. "The wind is fierce. What are we stopping for, anyway?"

Fyfe laughed. In many ways he was a match to Cora. "That's a plain hint for us, Miriam, to make ourselves scarce."

Miriam bade an abrupt good-bye, despite Sedley's demur, and started up the street, Fyfe falling in step briskly. Sedley wavered for a moment, but they were out of hearing. Cora, a fluff of white furs, her rose-pink

hat matching her rose-pink cheeks, was smiling enticingly.

"Let's walk quickly, Mr. Danvers," she cajoled, "and then we'll toast our feet by the grate-fire and get a cup of tea, scalding hot, with piles of cream in it."

Meantime Fyfe and Miriam pursued their southward way. Fyfe was quite jovial since the encounter. "They're pretty friendly, those two," he volunteered. "I caught them neatly the other day. It was a glorious morning and I sloped lectures for a spin up the lake. Away up the shore by the R. M. C. I stopped to get wind, and I heard somebody talking. The cadets were at their classes, so I got curious and went on a little farther. There they were, Danvers and Miss Hotchkiss, sitting on a red rug in a little cove, as cosy as possible."

So they were as intimate as that! "I suppose you left in a hurry," Miriam laughed quickly, and then went on without waiting. "I haven't skated on the lake this year. I like it far more than the rink. You can go on and on for miles without those tiresome turns, and the air isn't damp."

"Could you come out to-morrow morning? The ice is perfectly safe and it won't be too cold. Can't you slope for once?"

"Oh, no, I couldn't. I couldn't think of it, thank you. I'm going home for Christmas, on Wednesday, and I'll have a lot to do. Anyway, I never slope classes," she added virtuously.

Fyfe shrugged his shoulders. "You're in a fair way to be a saint or an M.A. if you keep that up. What train are you taking, Wednesday? Not the Kick and Push? C. P. R., that's right. That's the one I'm booked for." Then, answering the surprise in her face, he added, "I've a friend down the line. I'm not going to intrude on my devoted aunt this time! But I'll look out for you.

There'll be a big crowd on board. Oh, you stop here. I thought it was farther along. Well, good afternoon, Miriam. Thanks for a pleasant walk."

Elizabeth's little home was a nest of comfort. A grate-fire glowed in the drawing-room. In the dining-room beyond, the table was set for four. Hugh Stewart, comfortably ensconced in a big leather chair by the grate, was talking to Tom Rutherford. Elizabeth drew the girl into the hall and squeezed her joyously. "I've got your John Hielanman here," she whispered. "And he's awfully fine, Miriam. Hurry off your things and be as nice as you know how. I must infuse the tea."

Miriam slipped out of her thick coat and smoothed her hair at the hall mirror. Her red corals showed up against the yoke of her brown dress. Her cheeks and eyes carried out the colour scheme exactly. Tom, sauntering out to speak to her, stood between the portières smiling down at her provokingly.

"Well, Rebecca," he began—"Ah, Miriam, I mean,—did you enjoy the long walk out? If you had not been so fashionably late, you might have had an escort." He winked slyly. Of course he had seen Fyfe come up to the very doorstep with her.

"I didn't mean to be so late," Miriam answered directly. "But I went to Sunday service at the college and it was longer than I thought."

"It was good, I hear."

"How did you hear?"

"From Mr. Stewart, the athletic champion. You know him, of course."

Miriam frowned at his effrontery, then, smiling, responsively, slipped past him into the drawing-room, and shook hands with Hugh. He had risen and was standing by the chair, the firelight playing over his tall figure and fresh face.

"I never had a chance to tell you how glad I was that the championship did come to you, Mr. Stewart. It was yours by right; all the girls said so. Fyfe Boulding didn't play fair."

"Well, thank you very much," Hugh said, embarrassed. "I was awfully proud and glad for it."

His very voice was a contrast to Fyfe's slow drawl—so quick, so full, with just that little "kick" to his "g's" that always caught her fancy even while she smiled.

"Are you enjoying the winter?" he was asking her.

"Oh, yes, I love the winter. You feel so brisk and ready for work, and then the skating——"

"Do you skate?" Hugh broke in, as though a great idea had visited him.

"Why, yes, every single afternoon. Don't you?"

"Yes, but I wasn't seeing you."

"You weren't looking for me."

"Well, that's so!" he answered, rather bluntly, the girl thought.

No, it wasn't blunt either. It was just downright honest. Most men would have pretended they had searched the rink daily for her, and by some trick of fate had always missed.

"I'll look for you from this time on, don't you forget." He spoke out so suddenly that Miriam gasped. *Stupid?*

"All right, if you're a good skater!" she returned. The moment after she felt contrite, for his face fell.

"I'm afraid I won't qualify. I never got to skate much down home. We didn't have skates very often, and when we had, they didn't last long."

"You had lots of ice," she suggested, mischievously.

At that a pleasant vision flashed across Hugh's mind. "Have you done much driving? Don't I wish I had one of our horses here, and the cutter. Well, but the spin I'd take down this lake! It was the greatest sport you

ever saw, racing on the ice!" He turned to Tom in his enthusiasm, but Tom was in the dining-room, evidently, so he was fain to turn again to Miriam. Her face glowed responsively.

"All right, I'll go whenever the horse arrives," she nodded, provokingly. A sudden wild notion that visited him of handing precious money over to a livery, and booking her then and there, was checked by Elizabeth's calling them in to tea. Elizabeth's teas, like everything with which Elizabeth had to do, were generous. The table glittered with wedding silver. Plated ware fraternised with sterling silver unabashed in her home.

"You'll be breaking up classes this week, I suppose," Tom said, serving the cold meat.

"Most of them are going Wednesday," Miriam announced. "That's when I'm going."

"And what about you, Mr. Stewart?"

"I'm staying in town."

"You poor man," Elizabeth cried out. "To spend Christmas holidays in a boarding-house! You take cream, don't you? I remember when I went to college I used to wish I wasn't a city girl, when holidays came round, for I did envy all the other students rushing in to buy their single fare tickets and having barely enough money left to manage it. It seemed so exciting."

"Do you want to go to church?" Tom asked suddenly, pulling out his watch. "If you do we'll have to hurry."

"I've been twice to-day," Miriam rejoined, "and it's very comfortable here."

"Now you're hedging, Rebecca. Say candidly you don't want to," Tom retorted.

So, after tea, Elizabeth led the way to the drawing-room. "Tom, poke up the fire, like a good man. You

sing, Mr. Stewart? Oh, we'll try something quite familiar. Would you rather have a psalm?"

Miriam never forgot that evening. The soft light of the room, the comradeship, the music, the sense of joy in her life, her college work, the anticipation of the trip home, and Christmas, it all lived in her memory in those strange days which were to follow and of which she was then in blissful ignorance.

For in no time, as it seemed, it was Wednesday, and in her trunk were Christmas gifts and a pile of books to be studied during that elastic fortnight at home. Sedley was at the station waiting and took her valise as she came hurrying on to the platform.

"There's plenty of time." His warm smile was reassuring. "Have you got your ticket? Give it to me and I'll check your trunk. You'd better let your bag go, too."

He came out again quickly. "Well," he said, looking down at her as they stood on the platform, "are you glad to be going away?"

"Yes, I'm glad to be going home, of course. But I'll be glad to get back, too."

"I haven't seen much of you, lately. Where have you been keeping yourself?"

"Why, just in the usual places, Sedley, around college and my boarding-house." She had missed him. But it was worse when he put the blame on her.

"Yes, I know," he said quickly. "You're always the same dependable Miriam. It's we others who fly from one thing to another. Never mind, after Christmas——"

"Yes, after Christmas," Miriam echoed, a little smile creeping around her mouth. "That's a wonderful time, 'After Christmas'; every one seems to be waiting for it, to do great things. We're going to begin to study then. We've been thinking about it all Autumn."

Sedley was watching her with a curious, lingering expression. It was as though he too was conscious of the slight barrier between them and would fain remove it. Then the shriek of the locomotive sent a thrill of expectation through the waiting crowds.

Miriam was bundled into the train. Sedley put magazines and candies beside her, and with a hurried farewell she was off.

CHAPTER X: QUARREL IN A STRAW

"Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake."

—*Hamlet,* Act IV, Sc. 3.

The train roared into Ottawa station. It was a bitterly cold day and the drifted snow was dazzling in the winter sunshine. Yet quite a crowd was waiting, and Miriam spied her sister's familiar form among the rest, eagerly pressing forward. It was her first home-coming and the sensation was a pleasant one. She felt herself a woman of the world with three months of University life behind her and the acquaintance of some hundreds of young men and women to her credit.

A pronounced embrace proclaimed to all onlookers the fact that the prodigal was receiving a welcome home. Then Pauline's eyes became engaged in a swift survey of the outpouring throngs of students. Miriam was fumbling for her trunk check among a medley of papers, keys, erasers and hairpins. "Yes it's here, I've got it! At first I didn't think I'd need a trunk, but then I thought I would. You never know what you want, and then there are my books. I must study."

Deaf to her sister's chatter, Pauline was completely engrossed with the students around them who were exchanging noisy greetings or fond farewells, despite the frosty air. She quite enjoyed the stir and excitement of it all, and was distinctly annoyed when Miriam touched her arm suggestively. "Perhaps we should go, Pauline?"

Pauline responded so far as to slip her arm into the younger girl's as she lolled against her, but still listened and smiled at large. Miriam gave another pull to the arm locked in hers. Pauline moved one unwilling step in the direction of home. The shout of "All aboard!" recalled her suddenly, and the train glided out.

Pauline turned away with a fretful shiver. "It's blessed cold on this platform. I suppose we've missed our car through that stupid delay. Come on!"

The Campbells lived in a substantial brick house set back among trees. Roderick Campbell had been in the Government employ in increasingly responsible positions ever since he had moved to Ottawa from the Island of Cape Breton. Highly esteemed, reserved to the point of austerity, a scholarly man, books were his favourite pastime. Hence his special interest in his daughter's academic career.

"Well, Miriam, back for your holidays?" he asked, kissing her. Then, surveying her with more interest than his wife had seen him show for many a day, "You're looking well," he concluded.

"How do you like her suit, Roderick?" Mrs. Campbell asked, catching him out of his reverie for once. "She looks very smart, I think. It needs pressing, Miriam," she added, "and I certainly wouldn't have worn that blouse for travelling. It's all right for school."

"*College,* mother. You always say school."

"How are your Aunt Ellen and your uncle, and all of them?" her father asked, dwelling with evident pleasure on the girl's animated expression.

"What about Sedley?" Pauline broke in. "Is it true that he's engaged to that Hotchkiss girl? That's the story that's come down here. *You* never tell us anything. You fill your letters with 'receptions' and 'year' meetings that we don't care a bit for, and never write a

word about the people we do know. What about them? Are they really engaged? I can't believe it of Sedley. Did you see them much together?"

"Two or three times anyway," Miriam said, flushing at the vexatious remembrance of that encounter by the lakeside.

"No time for Shakespeare now, I suppose," Pauline said, noticing the flush. "It's a mighty good thing for you to get over talking that twaddle."

"Shakespeare—twaddle?" said her father.

"Miriam's talk was at any rate." Pauline never enjoyed her father's sallies. "Speaking of being in love with Orlando and all that nonsense, and going mooning down the garden after Sedley, for all the world as though she were head over ears in love with *him*."

"So I am," Miriam said, hotly.

"Oh, you're trying to work the cousin idea very beautifully, my girl, but there's more than that to it. You never get so upset over Fyfe. Mother, I wish you could have seen those specimens of students! Very sporty-looking, *I* thought them!"

"You weren't talking to them, Miriam?" Her mother's tone was tense with horror.

"Talking with them? She certainly was! The train was full of men from Kingston," Pauline interrupted.

"There was nothing sporty about them!" Miriam flared up.

"I sincerely hope not," her mother said. "But surely you would know. What about it, Pauline?"

"I didn't have much chance for details," said her eldest daughter cautiously. "But they weren't anything to look at, I'll tell you that straight, Mother, and my opinion of them isn't very high."

"I'm very much surprised at you, Miriam. Yes, and vexed," her mother began. "Roderick, I always said she

should not be trusted alone. I thought her Aunt Ellen would have guarded against friendships of that sort, but it seems she hasn't."

"My dear Laura, how can her Aunt Ellen sort out acquaintances among those hundreds of students?" Mr. Campbell was always aroused when his wife attacked his sister Ellen. "She doesn't know the college men. I hope Miriam has enough native sense to look after herself."

Miriam turned a troubled glance at her father. Did his answer hold a reproof for the style of acquaintance her sister pictured? She would not deign an explanation before Pauline, but at the first opportunity she would tell her father all about things down in Kingston. She coveted his approbation. Surely he understood how baseless were her sister's fabrications.

"Who was the queer-looking bundle in the grey hat with all the brood?" her sister asked when they were seated around the dinner table some time later. "She was shouting good-bye out of the window, but you didn't see her."

Miriam started in contrite recollection. "Mrs. Dan Rutherford!" she exclaimed. "I met her on the train. I'm so sorry I forgot. But I'll see her next week."

"Why, does she live in town? She went right on!"

"No. She's going down to her mother's for Christmas,—she's——"

"Rutherford, Mrs. Dan Rutherford," Mrs. Campbell narrowed her eyes and bit her lip. "Is that poor Elizabeth's sister-in-law?"

"Elizabeth's sister-in-law. Yes, that's what she is. She comes from near here. She's taking the children to the country for Christmas."

"And what is she going to do in Ottawa?"

"She has some friends here—I think she said. I'm not sure."

"Yes, oh, probably, over among the French. How did you come to meet her, Miriam?"

"We were sitting in the same seat, the car was terribly crowded, and she introduced herself."

"She looked like that sort," Pauline put in.

"Well, she was very friendly. She was asking all about us——" she hesitated and stopped.

"Yes?" her mother said. She saw that Miriam kept something back. "What was she asking you? I hope you did not become garrulous and confide in her all our home affairs! I meant to have told you especially not to mention to anybody your Aunt Victoria's plan for her Summer home. She particularly wishes it kept private."

Miriam laughed indignantly. Why should she start talking about her Aunt Victoria's mysterious and important plans? The Boulding relations were not prime favorites with Miriam, least of all Fyfe, who as a small boy had got into her bad graces by devouring her box of preserved fruits.

In quiet seclusion at the bottom of her trunk lay Miriam's college books during all the Christmas festivities. The days passed like a dream—shopping, calls, luxurious evening hours with books, short, busy mornings. All the same old life, and yet with a difference. There was a feeling of expectancy, a sense of marking time, an eagerness, through all her enjoyment, for the end of holidays and the return to college. She felt that the roots of her life were set in a new soil, that she shared her sister's interests in but a superficial manner, and the fact that she knew she must conceal this only proved how radical the separation was. Pauline was too keen not to understand. "It's just as I told you, Mother, last June," she said one evening. "Miriam isn't the same girl at all.

I knew it would spoil her. She doesn't care a fig for us now. It's all college, college."

"She seems very content," her mother protested, unwilling to notice the change. "She's upstairs putting hooks on the back of her green dress, singing quite happily."

"Yes, did you notice what she was singing? 'Queen's College is our jolly home,' to the long meter doxology. That sort of irreverence doesn't sit well on Miriam. She's getting too flip and cool. I suppose that's the correct thing in University training, but it didn't strike me as very reverential. She certainly is not as good as she was three months ago. She had the audacity to tell me Carlyle was inspired when he wrote 'Sartor Resartus.'"

Her father, getting into his overcoat, turned to listen. His eyes were gleaming under their shaggy brows. How much he would have enjoyed that conversation between Miriam and Pauline! "She said that, did she, that Carlyle was inspired? I suppose she'll be saying the same of Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey.'"

"Oh, I suppose she would," Pauline spoke doubtfully, not quite sure of her father's ground. "You really ought to speak to her, father. She'll go all lengths before she's through. She'll be an agnostic."

It was a Sabbath evening and Miriam was walking home with her father along the snowy streets. Long fingers of light from the church windows stretched into the darkness. "A week from to-morrow you leave us, Miriam?"

"Yes, I'm sorry I do."

"Oh, I wouldn't be sorry if I were you. You'll never have a happier time than at college."

"Why, Elizabeth says that's not true, father. She told me she enjoyed life more each year."

"Well, Elizabeth may, but I can't say it's true of my-

self. Whether it's something physical or mental or both I cannot determine, but certainly the years press heavily on me. My college days and my days at the old home are a very bright memory." His tone was low and depressed and struck Miriam's heart. Very rarely did he speak this way.

Just as they reached their own doorstep a little woman, bustling down from the opposite direction, called out to Miriam, "Miss Campbell, just a moment."

"It's Mrs. Dan Rutherford," Miriam said hurriedly. "Why in the world should she come poking along on Sunday night?"

The grey hat bobbed into view under the electric light. Her round face beamed familiarly.

She gave her nervous little laugh when presented to Mr. Campbell. "Delighted to meet you. Thanks, yes, I'll go in for a few minutes. I really shouldn't for I've left the children with my cousin, and Vivian's back teeth are just coming through and she's real fretty."

They were in the house by this time. The far end of the library opened into the dining-room where the table could be spied arranged for supper. Mrs. Campbell was entertaining two gentlemen at the upper end of the room, while Pauline was putting fruit and cake on the table. It made a welcome picture and Mrs. Dan took in every detail with a second's glance of her round little eyes.

Then there was a hurried scuffle in the dining-room as some one turned off the light. At the same time Mrs. Campbell pulled the portières sharply across the dining-room entrance, and, excusing herself abruptly, hurried into the hall. The glance that she gave Mrs. Dan would have frozen any one else perfectly solid. Miriam felt her heart grow icy within her.

"This is Mrs. Dan Rutherford, mother," she faltered. "She came in for a few minutes' chat."

"So glad to meet you," purred little Mrs. Dan, quite unabashed, though she had seen all the agitated movements inside. "I have always heard great things of Mrs. Rod. Campbell."

Mr. Campbell grinned into the depths of his overcoat before he parted with it. Never before had Laura been called Mrs. "Rod."

"Come into the drawing-room." Mrs. Campbell swept her and Miriam inside and pulled the door behind them. One would have supposed there were arch conspirators in the library.

"And did you meet in church?" Mrs. Campbell asked frigidly, when they were seated on chill, brocaded chairs.

"No, I came the other way. Well, really, I confess I didn't go out to-night. We were at the cathedral this morning. I'm 'church.' But to-night Vivian was fretty with her teeth, and I didn't like to leave her with my friend. *You* know, Mrs. Campbell, how it is with teething babies, you with girls of your own." She glanced towards the door as though she expected the other daughter to appear and be presented.

But she might have known better. Pauline was talking away gaily to the men, wishing every moment that "that person" would take her departure and let them put on supper.

Mrs. Campbell did not launch out into the subject of teething. She continued to address general remarks and questions to Mrs. Dan, completely ignoring the unhappy Miriam. And Mrs. Dan rambled on and on about babies and boys and Kingston, and to Miriam's horror pointed a finger at her for "flirting," until, what with the increasing chill in the room and in her mother's manner, Miriam felt as though she would have to scream. For every one was waiting—Pauline for her mother's reappearance—her mother for this little woman's departure

—and this little woman herself for the supper, for which she was more than ready.

Just when Mrs. Dan was launched into a lengthy description of Claude's glands, and Mrs. Campbell was playing with a paper-knife in a manner bordering on rudeness, and Miriam was trying to look desperately interested, the drawing-room door opened suddenly, and Mr. Campbell, poking in his head asked in exasperated tones, "Aren't we ever going to have supper, Mamma?"

It was bad enough to speak of supper at this juncture, but to call her "Mamma" was the last straw. Mrs. Campbell swept to her feet, Miriam followed automatically; little Mrs. Dan bobbed up too, and before she knew it found herself shaking hands with her hostess. It was very neatly done and no one but Mrs. Campbell could have forced so much effusion into her tones, nor drawn her visitor so skilfully to the front door as she pressed her hand in farewell.

When the last sound of her quick little footsteps had crunched away down the street, Miriam faced her mother, her cheeks one scarlet dye. "Why didn't you ask her in for supper, Mother?" she demanded impetuously.

Mrs. Campbell stepped back into the drawing-room to prevent being overheard. Then she answered coolly, "Why? Because I did not choose to. I am free to ask what guests I want in my own house, am I not, Miriam?"

"Freedom means freedom to choose the right," the young girl blurted out, some sudden whiff of philosophy blowing into her brain.

"The right? And who is to say what is right? Surely not the daughter to her mother. What folly have you got in your mind now? Come in to supper at once. It is shamefully late for my guests."

"I'm not going to supper. I don't want any. I'm going upstairs to bed." Her voice was muffled.

"Of course you want supper. Don't go off into heroics."

"No, Mother, it would choke me. I want to go upstairs. That poor, nice little Mrs. Dan who shared her lunch with me."

"Well, you were very foolish to take it. There was a diner on, surely?"

Miriam swallowed her answer. She knew if she said she had no money all sorts of questions would be asked. She suddenly shot past her mother as though she would be captured bodily and rushing upstairs shut herself in her room. Her teeth were chattering from the long stay in the cold drawing-room, but big, hot tears were bursting from her eyes.

CHAPTER XI: THE TRIER OF SPIRITS

"You were used
To say extremity was the trier of spirits;
That common chances common men could bear;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating."

—*Coriolanus,* Act IV, Sc. 1.

"The marriage is announced of Miss Cora Hotchkiss with Mr. Sedley Danvers at Kingston, Ontario, on the evening of December the twenty-fourth."

Miriam Campbell, sitting in her boarding-house this quiet, snowy evening, scribbling idly in her note-book, recalled the morning that this news had reached their home. Recalled Pauline's fluster of excitement, her mother's reserved smile, her father's ill-concealed anger, her own sense of complete disappointment.

Sedley had acted so covertly, so hurriedly. His own uncle had no warning. That was hard to bear. But his choice of wives was inexplicable. Had he been a man of many loves, the amazement would not have been so general. But Sedley had never been so. He was naturally genial, fond of the society of his kind, fond of prodding odd corners to discover hidden mines of character, of laughing over human foibles, of melting his heart at the pathetic and pitiful, often so bravely hidden. So he had many friends; and so, in the diffusion of his interests he had comparatively few intimates.

Among his girl friends there were many whose light remarks stirred his laughter, whose sallies provoked his quick retorts. But no one had imagined that the cul-

tured young lawyer would link himself with one whose thin life could contribute less than nothing to the monument which their united lives should raise. People did not voice their objections in these words, but none the less they felt the incongruity of the alliance.

The wedding was still a nine days' wonder when Miriam returned to Kingston. Her landlady, an enquiring soul, fond of ferreting out secrets, counted herself fortunate to have the cousin of the much-talked-of bridegroom beneath her roof.

"I suppose they'll be taking in all the theatres," she began as she handed Miriam her cup of tea. When this good woman wanted to take you off guard and surprise you into admitting something, she invariably jumped at once into the middle of her subject.

Miriam knew whom she meant; her own thoughts had been with the bridal couple. So she answered carefully, "You mean Mr. Danvers?"

"And Mrs. Danvers," the other supplemented, with relish.

The glow on the girl's cheek deepened. As quickly as possible she disposed of her thin, hot tea. She would hurry upstairs.

"I expect *you* knew about it, though, Miss Campbell," her landlady wheedled. "When the talk was all of how sudden the thing was, and what a shock to his folks, I said, 'Oh, Miss Campbell will know all the ins and outs long since. Her cousin Sedley always made a lot of her.' "

Miriam struggled for a non-committal reply. Finding none, she drank more tea.

"Have some cake," her landlady urged. "You'll be helping the bride receive, I suppose? When do they come back? Of course you've heard from *him.*"

No, she hadn't, not a word from Sedley. But not for the world would she admit this.

"They say she looked pretty as a picture, going off," the garrulous voice continued. "Some friends of ours saw them at the Junction and they said he just couldn't keep his eyes off her."

Miriam pushed back her cup. "Have another," was the genial invitation. "Come, you haven't made out your meal. You're not homesick already? Did you leave your mother well? Stout as ever? Well, I wouldn't take the marriage too hard. Of course she's not as good as he is by a long chalk, but then she's pretty and she's society and that goes a good way in Kingston."

Privately Miriam thought Kingston's standards were higher than that. She said to herself, as she trailed up to her room again, that such an old University city put too high a premium on culture and intellectual acumen to enthrone in their social circles one of Cora's type, even with the cloak of Sedley's name and reputation thrown around her.

But how could she bring herself to meet the bride? How could she call her "Cousin Cora"? How could she bear to see Cora claiming relationship with her uncle Owen and cousin Elizabeth, and, it might be, trying to patronise her? As Miriam sorted her notes and looked over her books for the new term's work that first, long, lonely evening, she reviewed in imagination all these mortifications in store for her.

But the next morning came arrayed in white and gold and pink; diamonds danced on the snow and new life tingled in the veins. Miriam's courage revived. How delightful to step out into the keen air, fresh and responsive to all the morning's charms!

"Joy was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven."

Threading the paths beneath snow-laden evergreens across the city park, tramping in from the long lake shore, or hurrying from the upper streets—singly, in groups, in Indian file, in solid phalanx—chattering, chaffing, chanting their College ditties—from every quarter of the city came the students, their goal the old limestone buildings, around the white quadrangle.

"My father sent me down to Queen's
That there I might become a man,
So now I'm in the city,
Where the girls they are so pretty,
On the old Ontario strand."

At the corner of Deacon Street Miriam fell in with a group of girls. "When did you get back?" they asked her. "Did you do any studying in the holidays?" There was a laugh as she shook her head. "I'm glad you didn't," said one of them. "It relieves my conscience greatly."

"Miss Campbell doesn't need to study in holidays," said Rachael, quite seriously. A pale, set-looking girl spoke up then. She did not altogether approve of Miriam. "I translated all my 'La Fontaine,' and three chapters of 'Aus dem Geschichte.' "

"Well you're a *Taugenichts* yourself to do it," another cried out. "You look awfully white," she added, spitefully. "To study in the holidays is an unpopular move and, if you really achieve it, to boast of it afterwards is most unwise."

"Wait until Mephisto hears of it," they told her. "He'll put you in the German play, see if he doesn't. Then good-bye to the rink."

Laughing and talking they passed into the warm, dim air of the old Arts building. A moment later the door that had slammed behind them opened to admit a group

of men who had been following in their footsteps. Hugh Stewart was one of the group. He came up the stairs behind them. As the girls branched up their side, Rachael nudged Miriam significantly. Turning, she noticed the faint flush on the little Jewess' heavy white cheeks.

"That's Mr. Stewart," whispered Rachael. "Hasn't he got the most beautiful eyes? I never got an introduction, but I will, for we'll have to receive together at our year 'At Home.' He's the president, you know, and I'm first Vice. That's the way they did last year." Her laugh was freighted with excitement.

Miriam was plainly surprised. Somehow she had never thought of the little Jewess as being particularly interested in the students who passed her in and out of the halls and lecture-rooms. And though Rachael was a favourite with the girls and had been ever since her initial somersault, it was doubtful whether the men gave a second glance to the small figure in black with bright, dark eyes, peering out from behind her spectacles. Yet she had fixed her choice and had begun her secret worship.

Hugh was in the pillory that morning in "Junior Phil." The Professor had brought a bunch of corrected essays, on the subject of the "Summum Bonum," and he stood gleefully by the side of his desk, while he put some questions to "Stewart" regarding the essay submitted, which though placed in class "B" evidently held some promising mistakes. Hugh's face was set and pale, but he held his ground and answered doggedly each penetrating question. Miriam felt a wave of pity surge in her heart. How merciless the professor was! Would he never let the poor fellow off? And how mean to throw back your head and roar at an answer which was wonderfully good, *she* thought.

She had managed her essay and achieved class "A,"

but never could she have stood up before the classful to answer such challenging, incriminating questions, put with such keen relish—never, never in this world! Hugh was splendid!

"He'll ask a girl next. Duck your head!" whispered the girl beside her. "He's looking our way. No, it's another man. Say, your cousin got back, eh?"

Miriam shook her head. The cloud came up and covered her sky once more.

"Yes they did—last night—my cousin came on the train with them. I met him on the way to college. Sh! The Prof's looking."

So they were home, had cut their wedding-trip short. Now she was faced with it. This was her Hill Difficulty surely.

The lectures dragged through their weary length. Miriam longed for release, and yet she almost dreaded the walk home. She might meet Sedley coming through the park, might meet them both. Surely it was all a nightmare and she would wake and laugh over her distress.

But the days passed along with the same round of lectures and studies; the same dread of an encounter kept her away from her aunt's house; there persisted the same conviction that she should show her mettle by going to see the bride, the same shrinking, the same unhappiness.

One evening her landlady read from the society column the announcement of Mrs. Sedley Danvers' post-nuptial reception. "To-morrow, then," Miriam said to herself, "will be my hard day, my Waterloo. For I must, I *will*, be Cora's first caller."

Mrs. Sedley Danvers' house was one of a brick row. You mounted a tiny flight of steps and before you knew ,t, found yourself in a square vestibule, with a brand-new mat for your snowy feet, and a shining bell to press.

You pressed it. An immaculate maid whirled open the door and you were ushered into a softly-carpeted little drawing-room.

Cora, in trailing white, was near the door; beside her, Elizabeth. Of course Elizabeth would be there, Elizabeth whose hurt was deeper far than Miriam's, and who yet was ready to forget herself completely for Sedley's sake.

Elizabeth gave her cousin a radiant smile, as though it were a beautiful thing to come here. Heavy on Miriam's heart lay the remembrance of those days and weeks of rebellion and unhappiness which had led up to this day.

But Cora was all effusion. She really looked handsome, and her tiny home made quite a sparkling background in all its bridal freshness. Perhaps—was it possible that Cora was the very one for Sedley, after all? Miriam shut the thought away in trembling denial.

"How perfectly dear of you to call so soon!" Cora gave an infinitesimal peck to her cheek. "You're positively the very first. Of course it's frightfully early you know, and I suppose I'll have a perfect shoal of callers. Everybody says they're coming." She gave an exaggerated sigh of weariness. Then, gushing again, "But I do think it was sweet of you to be the first. I must tell Sedley. He thinks you have the most wonderful brains."

Miriam felt at a loss to know what to say. For once she wished Pauline were there. "Did you have a nice trip?" she ventured.

The bride shrugged her white shoulders. "Oh, New York was all right, but I was nearly congealed in that beastly hotel. I couldn't stand it any longer so I told Sedley to pack up that night."

Elizabeth stirred slightly. "It was a pity, too, that

you couldn't have gone on to Washington. I'm sure you would have enjoyed it."

"Oh, I suppose," was Cora's nonchalant reply. "Sedley tried to stick out for it, but I simply wouldn't hear of it, so back we came." She renewed her intent smile as a young girl came gliding in from behind the portières with a cup of tea.

"This is my cousin," she murmured. "Miss Miriam Campbell, Sedley's cousin, you know, and frightfully clever."

Miriam coloured awkwardly at the introduction. The other affected dismay. "Do 'frightfully clever' people drink tea?" she asked, holding off the tray uncertainly.

"Oh, yes," said Elizabeth, promptly. "With plenty of sugar and cream. Surely you've noticed Sedley's proclivities. It's in the family." Miriam could have hugged her for the whole-souled way in which she swept her into the inner circle and left Cora to feel herself the new-comer.

But the other little soul was too microscopic to let this pass unchallenged. Her eyes narrowed. "I suppose it's no use, though, to offer Miss Campbell bride cake," she said with a small smile. "She wouldn't condescend to dream over it."

Cora laughed immoderately at this sally. "She thinks you put examination papers under your pillow. How screamingly funny! I must tell Fyfe Boulding. Pass the cake, you absurd child. There's the bell. First of the mob, I suppose. Oh you're not going, are you? Those *wretched* lectures! Well, it was awfully sweet of you to come. *Good*-bye." She spirited Miriam's hand into mid-air, where she pressed her fingers and dropped them lightly. Miriam deposited her card in the hall and fled.

The University Y. W. C. A. met on Friday afternoons

at four o'clock, up in the old Minerva room. Miriam had been there once or twice in the Autumn term, and might have made a more determined effort at regularity but for the fact that one of the most active workers was a girl she particularly disliked. Ever since the unfortunate episode of the Minerva room dance she had looked askance at Miriam, as one who had fallen from grace, yet had pointedly invited her to the Y. W. meetings and presented her with the year's programme neatly printed. Pulling out her calling cards at Cora's, Miriam had drawn this with it, and in the sudden revulsion of feeling against all the social whirl which Cora's post-nuptial reception at that moment typified, she suddenly determined to go straight back to college and visit the Y. W. It was only a quarter to four.

As she hurried through the park, she took out the card again and noticed the name of the leader. How strange it was, too, that she should be the one, a girl who was at all the student's dances! It can't be the same surely, Miriam concluded. Groups of girls were coming away from lectures as she passed through the campus. One of her own freshette bunch accosted her. "To the Y. W.?"

"Yes, come on back," Miriam urged. She had a sudden desire to be one in a large gathering. She need have had no fears on that score, however, for the leader's name was sufficient inducement, despite the attractions of the rink, and when Miriam and the two girls she had annexed passed up the dim hall to the third story, they found the old room filled to the doors. The girls were mostly those of the junior and senior years, but to Miriam's astonishment she found herself next Rachael, the little Jewess. Rachael's pale face lighted with its kind smile as she passed a hymn book. The

same old metallic piano which jangled out two-steps for the ardent dancers between lectures was playing softly,

> "Hold thou my hand, so weak I am and helpless,
> I dare not take one step without thine aid."

This was a prime favourite with the college girls, and played so appealingly in this quiet hour, up above the struggles of the lecture rooms, after the strain of the day's endeavours, its effect was very fine. Miriam's heart leaped up at that unison of voices.

Though but fragments of the address floated through her mind as she made her way down the campus path an hour later, she felt how she had been helped. Parting from the other girls, she turned up a side street.

And then suddenly she came face to face with Sedley.

"Miriam!" he exclaimed.

She wondered at herself for being so composed. "I didn't see you coming," she said simply. "I was at the Y. W. C. A."

"The Y. W.? What took you there?"

"Why, it's a good place to go, isn't it?"

He laughed aloud. "Of course it is. A good place to go. Certainly." Then, "You were calling at our home to-day."

Miriam flushed suddenly. "Yes," she said. "I was calling on your wife. How did you know?"

Sedley smiled. "I heard your voice. I was finishing a letter upstairs, and was going to run down but the bell rang again, and I was caught and you escaped." He stood smiling down as though waiting for her to speak.

What should she say? "Congratulations on your marriage, Sedley"? But she could not with honesty say that. Something kind and truthful anyway.

"Cora looked very well, Sedley. And your house is

as pretty as it can be. I hope you are going to be very happy."

A quick light came into his eyes. "Thank you," he said. "Your benediction, I was afraid, was never coming."

Her heart smote her. "It was all so unexpected," she faltered, and then wished she had left these last words unsaid.

"Yes," Sedley answered gravely. "And I erred there. I should have given my best friends word beforehand. I spoke of writing you. And so I meant to. But—things moved so fast——" he smiled reminiscently, looking off across the snowy streets on which the arc lights were making long paths of brightness.

"You forgive me?" He turned with his sudden smile. Forgive him? Yes, and try to be as good a friend of Cora's, as true and as generous as it was possible for her to be.

She smiled, assenting.

"How is Paul?" he asked in parting. "Does she find Queen's has spoiled you?"

"Oh, yes. That's what she says. That I've lost all interest in the home."

"Of course not. But you've found something larger. You're out after big game. Well, I must hurry. Come soon to see us. Good-night."

He hastened away in the darkness, and Miriam turned resolutely up the street which led to her temporary home.

CHAPTER XII: SPARKS OF NATURE

"How hard it is to hide the sparks of Nature!"
—*Cymbeline,* Act III, Sc. 3.

"I say, Stewart, lend me a strap."

"I'm sorry I don't own such a thing."

"You're lucky not to need them. I gave a twist to this left ankle of mine when I was a little kid, skating on a pond back of our yard. It's been weak ever since. I'll try over here."

He stamped across the little dressing-room to where another group of skaters were lacing up their hockey boots. Hugh straightened up to his full length, pulled down his sweater and drew on his gloves. The band at the far end of the rink was striking up "Annie Laurie" and the music blending with the whir-r and swish of the hundreds of skaters sounded quite inviting. It was a Saturday afternoon in mid-winter, and the rink was filled.

Hugh stood by the door of the dressing-room, trying to identify individuals among the motley throng, and was on the point of casting in his lot with the crowd. Two men walking around the side of the rink stopped beside him.

"Mr. Hugh Stewart?"

Hugh nodded.

"Well, Mr. Stewart, you may have heard of the movement among the students to erect a convocation hall in honor of the Principal."

"I heard the County had refused the money."

"The County, yes, unfortunately. But this is undertaken by the students, and we propose to finance it ourselves, and name it Grant Hall."

"That's splendid."

"I'm glad you feel like that. I think we shall have the support of every student. Could you canvass your year, the men, I mean?"

"How are the subscriptions running? How high, I mean?"

One of the men named a figure which seemed large, but Hugh nodded quietly.

"I'll see what I can do," he said.

"Thanks very much. You won't find they need much urging, and there's no end to what they can do if they once get started. Of course some of them can subscribe straight. All right, thanks, we'll see you again."

Hugh ran down the steps on the points of his skates and glided in between the groups of skaters. Another man, dodging around a corner, almost knocked into him.

"Look out!"

"Beg your pardon, Stewart. I didn't see you coming. That's such a dark corner by the dressing-room. Great crowd here. The ice is in fine shape, though. I see Boulding is enjoying himself."

"Where do you mean?"

"Right in front of you, to the left now. Don't you see, man? Fyfe Boulding and Mrs. Danvers?"

Hugh looked in silence. Cora Danvers was in a scarlet skating suit, with white furs. Her head was tilted at a charming angle, and her large eyes were pensively fixed on her escort's face. He was bending towards her, talking volubly.

"What do you call that, eh? Isn't that a flirtation for you?"

"Where's her husband?" Hugh asked impatiently.

"Oh, down at his office. He'll call for her when the fun is over and they'll walk off, happy ever after. No, he's not either. Isn't that Danvers standing there by the post?"

Hugh turned to look and at once recognised the young lawyer. The two students made a wider circle next time and came close to the benches where many were resting or waiting for friends. Sedley Danvers was leaning against a post, scanning the crowd. His eye lit on Cora at once, for her scarlet suit showed up brightly, and he stood watching her before she knew he was there.

The other student nudged Hugh's arm. "I wouldn't stand for that sort of thing if I were her husband. Best to start in strict with them, from the first. Then you avoid trouble. Reminds me of a good story I heard——"

His lengthy recital was lost to Hugh, whose roving eye had caught sight of a solitary little figure on a bench farther up. Hugh took a sudden resolve. He had not skated with a girl yet, but he remembered their conversation that Sunday evening before the holidays. He was going to make a break, and ask Miriam Campbell. How to get rid of his companion?

"Look here, Stewart," said that worthy, abruptly, "there's a girl up there I'm going to have a try for, if I don't break my neck stopping up short. I'll drop you like hot cakes at this next turn, if you don't mind."

Hugh's sudden sense of relief was tinged with anxiety lest they should have hit on the same girl. But no. His friend's lanky extremities curved in at the far end of the line and left him wonderfully free. Yes, there she was, in her brown suit, all alone.

Miriam started at the tall figure bringing up so suddenly beside her. He lifted his hat in salutation. The

next moment his skates slid from under him and down he went, sprawling on the ice, his big figure sending consternation into the hearts of a dozen skaters near.

There was a roar of laughter from the men and Hugh gained his feet in stern silence. If only he had not asked her! If only he could escape! But Miriam was bending forward in great sympathy. She had no inclination to laugh. But she did feel averse to trusting herself with one so shaky. Had she not said definitely, "If you're a good skater"? However, there was nothing for it but to venture; it would hurt his feelings to refuse. A moment more and they were swaying up the rink together, to the tune of "Just One Girl."

Cora spied the two. Fyfe Boulding having deposited her at the foot of the steps, she was waiting for Sedley to hurry over to meet her. Whom was he watching? Oh, Miriam Campbell, with that length of man beside her. Cora turned a petulant glance as they passed close by, too deeply absorbed in the subject of the projected Grant Hall to notice any one else.

"I'm collecting for *my* year," she was telling Hugh. "They're simply splendid, those girls. One of them is giving her scholarship money, and one the fees she would have paid if she hadn't had a nomination. And another is 'passe-partouting' pictures—you wouldn't think she'd make much at that, would you? But what do you think of berry-picking? There's a splendid Highland girl, Flora—no, I mustn't tell names—anyway she said she had picked berries a good many summers to make money for herself, and she guessed she could do it again for Geordie!"

"My, he'd like to hear that! I wish you could tell him. Some of his Toronto friends think it can never be done. They don't see how we'll get the money. If they heard about the berry-picking, now!"

"Oh, it's confidential. Absolutely! Besides I'd never dare talk to the Principal so freely."

"Why, Miss Campbell, you don't know him, then. He's the most human and approachable man you ever saw. He always calls me by my first name. I met him on the campus the very first day and he asked me who I was and never forgot."

"I thought I met him the very first day, too," Miriam laughed convulsively at the recollection. "But it was the janitor. He opened the door for me and was so very stately and white-haired and gentlemanly that I thought it was the Principal welcoming me to Queen's. But the story got back to Geordie, and he said it was the best compliment he had received."

Sedley, hearing Hugh's laugh as they passed, wondered however Miriam had achieved it. Cora was plainly cross.

"Ready to go home, dear?" he asked the next moment.

"I don't know that I am," she said. "Everybody's here. Get your skates, Sedley, and come on."

"I'm so sorry. I left them home. There's a great crowd anyway."

"You always leave them home. I don't think the crowd is bad at all. Where we were, in the centre, it's quite smooth. Fyfe was teaching me the Dutch roll. I didn't know you were coming so soon."

"I'll go home if you like, and let you finish your skate."

"Nonsense, Sedley! he's got some one else by this time. Goodness! Look at the fright of a thing he has picked up. Oh, how screamingly funny! I believe he's skating with her just for sport. Isn't he the limit?" She laughed immoderately, so that every one around turned to see what the joke was. Sedley felt decidedly

uncomfortable. "Can't I find you a seat somewhere, if you don't want to put off your skates?"

"No, I'm going up here into the dressing-room." She whirled around and stamped up the stairs without giving her husband a chance to help her, throwing up her chin as she passed a group of girls. "Here, Sedley," she called, seating herself on a bench just inside the door, "come, and unlace my boots, will you?"

"I wouldn't be at her beck and call if I were half a man," one of the younger girls remarked. "If he has sense, he'll pretty soon show her."

Sedley felt from the attitude of the roomful that Cora's behaviour was exciting comment. He made up his mind, however, to give them no scene. "We're due at Father's to-night," he said cheerily, pulling out the laces. "We mustn't forget."

"Yes, what's the aim and object of it? Nothing particular, that I can see." She sighed and yawned, while Sedley laced up her walking boots. "Really it's a bore to go out sometimes. Of course, your mother means it kindly and all that, but I'd rather be excused."

"Telephone and explain. Mother will excuse you."

"Oh, there's nothing to explain. Elizabeth would come charging over at once to see if I were sick. She seems to look for it, from me."

Sedley's cheeks took on a dull-red tinge. They were walking out of the rink now, and Cora had hardly modulated her voice.

"Well, we won't stay long," he temporised. "I'll tell Mother you're tired and that we're both going to leave early."

Since Elizabeth and Sedley had married, there was room and to spare in the large brick house, but Dr. Danvers and his wife enjoyed nothing so much as a family gathering. They welcomed their son and daughter-in-

law as though they were indeed their own. "I always said I thought four children made a perfect family," Mrs. Danvers would say, "especially if there were two girls and two boys. And now I have them."

"Any one in?" Tom's voice sounded from below, but Elizabeth was half-way up the stairs. "Are you here, mother?" She came into the room, radiant with the cold walk.

Mrs. Danvers scanned her fondly. "You are cold, dear. Warm yourself at the fire. Your father spoke of driving over for you, but he was called out. Come to the fire, Tom!"

"You do look cosy." He stretched out his lean hands to the blaze. "I'm afraid you won't get me away to-night, Elizabeth."

"Well, to-morrow is Sunday. Stay, both of you. The house is so lonely that I often think of getting Miriam here. I asked her to come in to-night. I thought with you and Tom, and Cora and Sedley it would be nice to have Miriam as well."

"You should have asked Hugh Stewart, then," Tom suggested, "as long as you're dealing in couples."

"Why, is he a special friend of hers? Tom, what do you mean? Did you ever see them together?"

Tom smiled in his slow, provoking fashion. "Yes, I have seen them together, more than once."

Mrs. Danvers looked perturbed. "I am afraid that her mother will think I should have had more of an oversight." She broke off abruptly. "That must be Miriam now. Tom, you must tell me about this afterward. Remember!"

There were more than Miriam at the door. Sedley and Cora came up behind her. Cora's voice was keyed high and she was chattering incessantly.

"It's a beastly cold night," she announced, flinging

into the room. "How are you, Mrs. Danvers?" She nodded lightly to Elizabeth. "Tom, I want to sit by that fire. Will you please move over?"

"With the greatest possible pleasure," Tom said, vacating chair and all. "Well, Miriam, how are you faring this cold weather? Does your landlady keep you warm?"

Cora looked bored. "Sedley, come and sit down like a sensible person. Sedley must be peering into every one's books and magazines every place he goes!"

"Why it's second nature for Sedley to read in this room," Mrs. Danvers answered, quickly. "Let the boy do it if he wants to."

"Oh, certainly," Cora agreed. "He might as well put in the time that way." She yawned covertly.

Tom felt the blood tingle in his cheeks. He deliberately left Miriam's side and moved over by his sister-in-law, resolved to give her the chastisement which he had mentally promised.

Sedley slipped into the vacant seat by Miriam. "Studying hard? You must not overdo it. Could I help you?"

Cora's voice broke in on them. "Certainly not," she was saying. "A Professor's wife would never take precedence."

"But precedence—where?" Tom was following her up.

"In society, among people of the highest standing, socially."

"And who are they?"

"Oh, well, my dear fellow, *you* would not have much concern with them, but I may explain that there *are* certain distinctions, certain recognised classes——"

"But who makes these distinctions? *I* never heard of them."

"Possibly not. And I really don't see how the question concerns you."

"Oh, Elizabeth may be a Professor's wife some of these days," he answered, coolly, "though that cannot affect her social standing very seriously. A woman of intellect and of gentle spirit always ranks first with those whose opinions are worth while."

"Whose opinions are worth while!" Cora repeated. "Such as pedagogues and patent-medicine men. What humbug!"

Tom's perfectly controlled and direct gaze discomfited her. She moved her chair haughtily an inch or two farther from his. He watched her placidly for a full minute until she was tingling with wrath. Then he turned to see how the others were progressing.

Mrs. Danvers and Elizabeth were talking quietly at one side of the grate. Elizabeth sat on a low wicker chair full in the glow of the fire, which flooded her warm young figure. She was trying to shut out the sound of Cora's voice, determined that this pleasant evening should not be marred. Now and again her glance strayed to Sedley where he sat listening to Miriam's tales of the lecture-room and resolutely turning a deaf ear to the altercation beyond.

Into the midst of these several groups came Dr. Danvers, stamping off snow which still clung to his trousers—Dr. Danvers, glowing with good cheer and kindliness, his blue eyes bright with the frosty air.

"Is *this* what you're at?" he cried, stooping to kiss his wife. "This is comfort, I tell you, after a cold drive. Give me the poker, Tom. *You* don't know anything about grate-fires. Does he, Elizabeth?"

Cora, turning sharply at the doctor's entrance, was incensed at finding every one else so peaceful. Her

hawk-like eyes darted from Elizabeth and her mother to Miriam and Sedley, and a gleam of anger darkened them.

"Sedley!" said his young wife, sharply. "Bring my muff from the hall-seat. There's a handkerchief in it that I want."

Miriam started up in sudden atonement for her pleasant little time. "I'll get it, Cora," she said quickly.

"No, sit still!" Sedley said, and rose himself.

Then, whether it was her husband's tone, or Tom's "dressing-down" or her own ill-nature or everything combined, Cora's pretence at decency suddenly toppled over and she flew into a whirlwind of anger.

"Bring my coat, too," she flamed. "No, I'll put it on there. I'm sick of this high-school drivel."

"Hoity-toity!" said Dr. Danvers, swinging around with the poker in his hands. "What's the quarrel? *You* must not run off like that, Cora."

"Owen, hush, let her go!" his wife's cheeks held two pink spots. She caught the doctor's sleeve as he was about to follow his daughter-in-law. "Let her go! She is in a passion."

"Well, but I don't want any one to get into a passion in our home. Let me speak to her."

"I wouldn't waste my good breath on her," Tom said, briefly.

"No, Father." Elizabeth came up close to him and spoke low. "She is the one to speak to us. She has been very rude." She passed over to where Miriam was standing by the couch, biting her lip in distress. "Sit down, dear," Elizabeth coaxed, passing her arm around the young girl. "You looked so comfortable among those pillows it was just a shame to disturb you."

Sedley came in hurriedly. "Mother," he said, "Cora doesn't feel very well. She wants to go home, now. I promised before to tell you we could only stay a little

while, but I forgot. I'm very sorry." He smiled in his sudden way, even while he spoke. "I'll say good-night for her," he added.

"Sedley, are you coming?" called a sharp voice from the hall below. He started at the sound and kissed his mother quickly. "I was just going to get a cup of tea," she said, reproachfully.

"I know, I'm awfully sorry. Good night, Dad. Good night, Tom." He shook hands with his brother-in-law, gave a smiling nod to Elizabeth and Miriam and hurried downstairs. The hall door closed quietly the moment after.

Dr. Danvers turned to his wife. "What was it all about?" he asked. "What were you doing to her?"

"Doing to her?" his wife echoed. "Trying to give her a pleasant evening." By her tone one could tell she was piqued. She drew herself up resolutely. She would not let every one else's pleasure be marred. "Come, we'll have some tea. Elizabeth will you ring for it? Miriam, dear, put your Uncle Owen's books off the table, over on that shelf. We'll have our tea cosily by the fire. It looks quite inviting, Owen. Come, draw your chairs closer."

Tom obeyed the summons with alacrity. His face wore a curiously satisfied expression.

CHAPTER XIII: COMFORT AND LIGHT

"Now, GOD be praised, that to believing souls,
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair!"
—*Henry IV,* Part II, Act II, Sc. 1.

Mrs. Dan Rutherford was unpacking. She stood in the middle of the parlor, which was piled high with boxes, and gave orders to her husband and a man from the factory as to which next. Baby Vivian, in navy blue rompers, was staggering under the weight of a hammer that she had discovered near a box of tacks.

"For mercy sake, Vivian, if that should fall on your toes!" Mrs. Rutherford swooped down and wrested the tool from tiny tight fingers. A series of squeaks ensued and Mr. Rutherford looked up from the roll of carpet he was undoing to ask what was wrong.

"She wants the hammer," his wife answered briefly.

"The hammer! I left it out on the landing with the tacks!"

"Well, that's no place to leave it. She has been reaching things on the radiator this last week. Put it on the mantel. Vivian! She's after the saw. No, no, you naughty baby, you'll cut yourself!"

The saw was recovered amid shrieks, and Vivian was borne off, stiff-legged, to the pantry, with quieting results. Elmer and Claude, who were making the acquaintance of their new yard, burst in slushily.

"There's a kid next door got a dog!" Elmer announced. "He's just come home from school and his

dog's hitched to his sleigh. Say, Mother, when's dinner?"

"Dinner! Indeed there'll not be much of any kind to-day." Mrs. Rutherford moved over a pot and poked at the fire.

"Potatoes!" Claude called out. "That's what *I* like. When'll they be done?"

"Clara!" her husband demanded, "show me where you want this red carpet put."

His wife bundled the baby into the high chair with two soda crackers, gave one each to the boys, bidding them be off to the yard, thrust in some packing-box splinters to hasten the fire, and bustled in to the front hall.

The Rutherfords were getting settled quickly. The Cherry Cordial Company having spread itself beyond the capacity of its foundling home, the directors and owners, chiefly personated by Daniel Webster Rutherford, had moved the plant into the city of Kingston. It was with absolute complacency that Mrs. Dan viewed her future life in the University city.

"Clara! There's some one at the front door! Can you go down?" Her husband's mouth was full of tacks and he spoke thickly.

"No, don't come down, any one," a voice called out. "It's Elizabeth. I'll come up if I may."

Clara Rutherford gave one scandalised glance from her working garb to her husband. He nodded emphatically. If there was one thing on which Dan Rutherford *was* emphatic it was his sister-in-law, Elizabeth.

"Come on!" he roared, spilling some of the tacks. "We're up in the front room."

Elizabeth appeared at the turn of the stairs a moment later with a covered dish in her hands. "I might have left it downstairs," she apologised. "It's just some cold

pressed beef, Clara. I knew you wouldn't have time to cook."

Clara smiled ironically. "Not much time for making pressed beef," she said. "I don't eat it myself, thank you, but the boys will like it."

"It's very good of you to take the trouble," her husband hastened to add. "I feel like starting at it right away, I'm nearly famished."

Elizabeth laughed pleasantly.

"I'm glad it is so timely." She glanced around uncertainly. "Can I do anything to help you, Clara?"

Clara privately wished her miles away. "I really don't believe there is just now," she said elaborately. "It's just a case of arrangement and judgment. We're getting on real well, but the children are nuisances. There's Baby now," she started on the usual plump scramble downstairs.

Elizabeth followed a moment after. "Clara!" she called from the hallway. "Won't you let me take Baby for the afternoon? Tom and I will bring her back this evening, unless you'd let her stay all night."

"Oh, no, she'd never go to sleep away from home. Well, I'm almost afraid to let her go, Elizabeth, though I'm sure you mean it kindly. There's that long walk out by the lake shore to your home. The air would be raw and Vivian is croupy, just like Claude. Now Elmer never had throat trouble; his colds always go to his nose. You're kind, I know, but—you see, Elizabeth, you haven't had anything to do with children."

"No!" said Elizabeth, whimsically, "I haven't. Then suppose I take Baby to mother's for this afternoon. Mother would be charmed and it isn't far. There's Daddie to call in too, if anything happens," she added laughingly.

Yes, this suited Clara Rutherford to a science. She was anxious to cultivate Mrs. "Doctor" Danvers, and

Vivian would prove the thin edge, stout little body though she was.

"Where's Vivian going?" Claude demanded, stamping on to the verandah, as Baby, clad in bearskin, was being packed into her sleigh.

"How do you do, Claude?" said his Aunt Elizabeth, holding out her hand. "Won't you come and shake hands? I was at your home last summer. Don't you remember?"

He nodded sagely. "I remember all right. We had two kinds of pie, and ice-cream."

"Sure!" said Elmer easily. "And I got licked for giving some to Nellie's baby."

Their mother feared further disclosures. "Aunt Elizabeth brought something good," she told them, mysteriously, "Upstairs on the sewing machine in the hall."

"I'll take good care of Baby," Elizabeth assured her.

"Oh, I guess she'll be all right," Mrs. Dan agreed, diving out to coil another fold around the choked-up throat. "Keep her back to the wind when you turn the corner!" Then, retreating, "Don't let her see me go in." With that she shot back into the house and Miss Vivian who could not turn in any case, so wadded was she, gazed blandly before her. This was an improvement on the high chair.

Down Barrie Street the snow had almost disappeared from the sidewalk, and Elizabeth struck out into the middle of the road. One or two stray people passing along at this quiet noon hour glanced curiously from the sleigh to the propeller, knowing Elizabeth but not being able to place the baby. Elizabeth felt a certain fitness in the way her hands closed over that sleigh handle. It was beautiful to "pretend," out here in the sweet Spring air, with the noontide hush and the warm caress of the sun's strong rays high in the heavens above.

Up across the park two students were coming, a man and a maid. Now they assumed a familiar guise. Miriam surely it was, and the man Fyfe Boulding. Leisurely they sauntered, in that calm indolence which release from a long and strenuous winter engenders.

"Elizabeth!" the girl's voice called suddenly. "I didn't know it was you. Whose baby have you got?"

Elizabeth came swiftly round the front of the sleigh as she acknowledged the greeting. "Why, she's fast asleep, the pet," she exclaimed, dropping on her knees. "And her poor wee head is bobbing all round *so* uncomfortably! It's my brother Dan's little girl," she explained. "They're just moving in and I've captured Baby for the afternoon."

Miriam stooped to view the drowsy cherub. "Isn't she terribly fat?" she murmured, touching one bloated wrist, where the red mitts fell too short. Fyfe flecked a thread off his coat-sleeve, glancing sideways at the group. "Delightful air for sleeping, but bad walking," he remarked.

"I never think of the slush until I go in over my boot tops," Miriam remarked ingenuously. "Fyfe is always calling out warnings."

He glanced pensively at the hem of her skirt. "I look out for the puddles and Miriam watches the sky."

Elizabeth was moving on. "I must get this little one over to Mother's," she said pleasantly. "Are you going to lectures this afternoon, Miriam, or can you come over, too, later on?"

"I'm going to review my note-books. Otherwise I'd love to come."

"'Cram' she means," said young Boulding, "only the word savours of illegality, so we prefer to say review."

"Of course we do," Miriam retorted. "You only call

it cramming the last few days, and we have nearly three weeks yet. There's only one week of March gone."

"Three whole weeks," he repeated languidly.

> " 'Why should we only toil and make perpetual moan
> Still from one sorrow to another thrown?' "

He kept quoting under his breath, even after Elizabeth and the baby-sleigh had disappeared into Dr. Danvers' and they continued their slow walk up the side streets. He had branched off from Tennyson to Omar.

> " 'Then to the lip of this poor earthen urn
> I leaned—the secret of my life to learn;
> And lip to lip it murmured—while you live
> Drink—for, once dead, you never shall return.'

"That's pretty much my philosophy of life," was his comment.

"It's not!" Miriam said indignantly.

"Yes, just about," he drawled.

"You don't really believe it, though," Miriam protested. "It's a—it's a hideous belief. I just feel like quoting, 'Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee!' "

In Fyfe's glance surprise mingled with amusement.

"Well," he said deliberately, "prove that this isn't the be-all and end-all."

"Prove it!" the girl scoffed. "How do you want it proved? By mathematics? You explain to me who puts the longing in your heart for something beyond, and then tell me would the longing be there if there was nothing to meet it?" Where she had come upon this idea she did not really know, but it met the case.

Fyfe was plainly cornered. He walked on in puzzled amusement. "You're a theologian as well as a philosopher and a poet," he reflected. "But see now, supposing I

don't admit that every one has that longing for something beyond? I've never felt it."

"Oh, it's there, but it's dormant," Miriam answered sagely. "It's in your subconsciousness."

Fyfe was just going to ask where that was, when a sleigh bell behind made them step to one side, at the edge of the crossing. Dr. Danvers reined in his horse to speak to them.

"Miriam," he leant down and nodded to the girl to come nearer, his quick eyes noting her companion. "Elizabeth told me you were along here. I've just come from seeing your little Jewish friend, Rachael." He flecked the lines over the horse's back. "She's not much longer for this world."

Miriam started back, consternation in her face. "Why, Uncle, I never knew she was so sick. Just a low fever, they told me. Poor, dear Rachael!"

The girl's eyes were blinded by a sudden rush of tears. She turned her head quickly, biting her lip.

Dr. Danvers drew the lap-rug round him and gathered up the lines. His own face was agitated. "I thought probably you would like to know," he said simply.

Miriam nodded. Then in a moment, "Would it hurt her—could I go to see her?" she asked in an uncertain voice.

"No, it wouldn't hurt her—for a few minutes. She asked for you. She isn't suffering, mercifully, poor girl. But I wouldn't lose any time." He touched up his horse and the cutter sped away.

Miriam stepped back from the crossing, her face averted.

"Bad news?" said her cousin leisurely.

"Yes, I'll have to say 'good-afternoon.'" Miriam choked over the words. "There's a friend of mine—you know Rachael yourself—she is dying." Her voice trailed

away into tears. She turned from him and hurried down a side street.

The man looked after her a moment in serious contemplation. "Strange, too," he said to himself, "the turn our conversation had taken." He turned again to look after the girl's retreating figure.

Down the long street Miriam hastened, her thoughts in a tumult, her heart beating madly, until she stopped before Rachael's house. Many a time she had walked home from lectures with Rachael, in the sunny noon, and Rachael's little sister with the long, black curls would come dancing up the street to meet them. Now everything was quiet. The house Miriam knew well. It was taller than any in the block, tall and narrow and unadorned. She rapped quietly, and a Jewess opened the door. A faint gleam of recognition crossed her face at sight of the girl.

"Dr. Danvers thought I might see Rachael for a minute," she said in a low tone. "I'm Miriam Campbell, his niece, a college friend. Do you think she would care to see me?"

The woman went inside, and in a moment Rachael's mother appeared, her face white with sorrow.

"Come in," she said brokenly. "Rachael was speaking of you only this morning. Come upstairs. Oh, my poor dear, she's going to leave me."

It was all Miriam could do to keep from bursting into sobs, but she straightened herself resolutely and followed the mother up the steep staircase. In the side room at the head of the stairs the young girl lay, her raven hair across the pillow. Her poor, white face was turned to the door as they entered and when she saw her fellow-student her dark eyes were luminous with joy. Miriam felt a convulsive tightening of her heart. She leant over and touched the Jewish girl's hand. "Poor,

dear Rachael," she said, and wondered at her own quietness. "We all miss you so much. It doesn't seem like college without you."

Rachael's hands closed over hers, clammy, inert. "Give the girls my love," she whispered. "They're all so good to me." Then she closed her dark eyes wearily. "I couldn't study," she murmured, "I got so tired! That philosophy! Isn't it hard!"

She opened her eyes again and looked towards the little table by the window. All her college books were there. The text-books and note-books piled up neatly, and the fountain pen and her poor glasses lying beside them—all so idle. If a dagger had pierced her heart Miriam could not have felt more pain than she did at that moment. To bid good-bye to it all, when you had just begun. To feel too tired to study, and to pile up your college books and lie down beside them to die, how pitiful! how pitiful!

She bent over the girl again. "I must go, Rachael," she said huskily. "I'll give your message to the girls. Rachael, we all love you so." In an excess of emotion she bent and kissed the poor, white face. Then, lest she forget herself in a torrent of tears, she turned and fled from the room.

Blindly she stumbled down the stairs and out into the sunshine. Somehow she found her boarding-house and the shelter of her room. There she could give full vent to her grief.

Next morning at college Miriam learned that Rachel's pure spirit had taken its flight. It was a still Spring morning, with the sound of the twittering of birds and the first warm breath of reviving nature. A whisper of life and hope seemed to breathe in the air. Oh, for Rachael there must be an awakening too, far more glorious, far more permanent than the coming-in of Spring.

"And think, girls, she has gone," the voice at Miriam's elbow startled her. One of the senior girls was speaking. "Gone! that poor Jewish girl, no one knows whither, and I wonder if any of us ever tried to win her to believe in Christ?"

Miriam winced. No, she had never tried. But she remembered Rachael's face at the Y. W. meeting, the way she had sung,

> "Hold Thou my hand, so weak I am and helpless,
> I dare not take one step without Thine aid."

Rachael would not cross that lone river unaided. A light would flash along its waters, a hand would be outstretched to her in her weakness, and the poor little Jewess, tired with her struggle to know, would be brought safely home.

How Rachael would have marvelled at that concourse of students and professors who thronged the tall house and listened to the Rabbi's words of consolation! Miriam, seeing Hugh Stewart in the throng, wished Rachael could have known.

Perhaps Rachael did know. She knew more than any one now. The price she had paid was the utmost. She had given her life for the knowledge. Miriam tried to tell Hugh something of her thought. He had come up with her and was walking by her side. "One could almost wish to make the venture for oneself," she said.

He answered quite simply, "We'll have eternity for that."

Miriam spoke eagerly. "*You* could *never* say that this is the be-all and end-all, could you?"

Hugh did not refute with vehemence. His thoughtful, deliberate attitude showed how he had won through. "I was seeing something last night about this very question, in Henry Drummond's Addresses." He did not

realise how amazed the girl was at his choice of book. "I don't know that I can remember it exactly, but it was something like this,—'To love abundantly is to live abundantly, and to love forever is to live forever.'"

"That's beautiful!" Miriam answered. And half to herself and in claim of the promise for her friend, she added, "And Rachael did love abundantly. You didn't know her personally, did you?"

"No, I'm awfully sorry. I never got to meet her. We were to have received the crowd at our year 'At Home,' but she wouldn't have known me to see me."

Quietly Miriam folded away her friend's secret in the sacred recesses of memory.

There followed days of close study. Examinations were in the air. Long, hard hours of discipline when the boarding-house seemed intolerable, and the narrow confines of her room well-nigh suffocating. When the bright Spring sun showed up the Winter's dust and the bird-notes from the muddy streets and the stir of Spring air at her bedroom curtains made text-books a positive cross. Dreamy afternoons, which were meant for wandering along country roads, but which she must spend in her hall-bedroom or up in the deserted college library, between rows of musty tomes, depressing in their gravity. Days when the college halls were practically deserted, and the bulletin boards showed ragged scraps of ancient notices fluttering forgotten, when the rink was closed and all gaiety at an end, and only the stern, cold fact of study and examinations faced the student.

And at last came the days of the trial, when Convocation Hall was turned into a vast arena, where the competitors gathered in mortal combat and the witnesses were those bygone seers on the wall who, unmoved, had witnessed many a struggle, from their eventual element of calm, and whose lofty gaze inspired the frantic souls

below still to fight on. Elbowed by a science man on the one hand, by a theologian on the other, Miriam wrote away. All her store of hardly-won knowledge was registered once for all on paper, before the cares of this work-a-day world should have blotted it out. There was something fitting in the act, and a feeling of triumph visited those well-doers who were enabled to give an account at last of the laborious days they had lived.

Reward came speedily. For when the bulletin board was hoisted in the hall, one spotless, April morning, with the results of examinations posted thereon, Miriam Campbell's name figured conspicuously, and her heart sang with the jubilant birds, "I have attained! I have attained!"

CHAPTER XIV: THE NARROW GATE

"I am for the house with the narrow gate, which
I take to be too little for pomp to enter."
—*All's Well That Ends Well,* Act IV, Sc. 5.

It was the middle of August, and a hot wave was passing over Eastern Ontario. Ottawa lay baked in its fierce rays. The business streets were patronised by those alone whom stern duty summoned thither. In the residential districts the great majority of the houses were closed. A general air of midsummer desertion was abroad. But even in this summer solstice there were some brave spirits whom lapping waves and sylvan nooks enticed in vain—fathers and husbands and brothers who toiled in the city's heat that they might send fat cheques to meet hotel bills or pay the rent of summer cottages.

The Campbells' home was less lonely that its neighbours. The blinds in two or three windows were raised in the cool of the day, and the verandah chairs were always occupied after sunset. Mr. Campbell came home about five o'clock lagging his tired steps from the car. He was looking thin and worn, more than usually so, Miriam thought. Indeed it was no wonder. She often drooped herself, for the care of the housekeeping fell largely on her shoulders during her mother's absence.

Pauline was the visible head, but she exercised her authority in dictation rather than action. For all those numberless routine tasks of an orderly household it was Miriam who stepped into the breach and kept things running smoothly.

"Miriam is beginning to wake up," Pauline told her father. "Coming from college she's like a moon-struck calf. It's only when she's home for a while that she begins to act like a rational being. There's the advantage over the collegiate. She has five months with the family."

Her father turned over the morning paper reflectively. "Miriam is doing very well," he said. "She took a high stand on her Spring examinations."

"Oh, that's no credit to her, Father. Exams. are second nature to Miriam. She scribbles at a lightning rate. She's got your good memory."

Her father revolved this statement. "One requires more than a good memory and easy pen to succeed in University work," he pronounced.

"Oh, yes, I know," Pauline nodded vaguely. "Miriam puts on a very profound air and gives off some views she has read or heard as if they were her own, and it makes an impression. Oh, she's cute. I'll say that for her. And then she's got good eyesight." Pauline took off her glasses and polished them complacently, regarding them as the explanation of Miriam's apparent advantage.

"Where is she now?" her father asked, folding up his newspaper.

"Oh, sitting on the verandah, with some book or other. She thinks she has to keep up the character of student. So she drapes herself over a chair with one of the poets. I don't believe she reads a word of it, but she pretends to be deep in, and jumps when you speak to her."

Her father laughed in his tired way. "I thought you said she was waking up," he said, going towards the hall for his hat. "Whew! It's going to be a warm day. I'm really afraid of it. I'm glad your mother is coming home to-night."

"Oh, Miriam's better all right." Pauline assured him,

not heeding the latter part of his remark. "She's got a fad just now for housework, to impress you, I suppose."

Thud! went the mail into the letter-box. The postman's quick step died away on the pavement.

Pauline pulled out the letters. She started at the postmark of the first one in blank dismay. "Toronto! But it's from Aunt Victoria. I hope to goodness she's not coming here. I'm going to open it, Father."

Aunt Victoria, Mrs. Nat. Boulding as they called her in the West, was the only self-invited guest tolerated by Mrs. Campbell. But, sharing her sister Laura's dislike of visitors, she always made a great show of registering at the most expensive hotel when in town, a plain hint to all others to do likewise when in her home city. Such was her intention this time, as her letter explained. She and Nathaniel and Fyfe were on their way to Prince Edward Island and would be in Ottawa for a couple of days at the Rideau.

"That means they'll be in here this afternoon," Pauline said, noting the address. "And we'll have to have them up for dinner."

The telephone whirred beside her. Pauline flew to it.

"Yes," she said, "Miss Campbell is speaking. Why, is it *you?* When did you strike town? We just heard from your mother. Yes, I'm keeping house for father. Mother is up the Ottawa. Oh, yes, *she's* here. *Isn't* it hot! Well, I couldn't leave father to hold the fort alone. Now you're trying to be funny. No, really. All right, I'll be delighted. Come in for dinner. Yes, I'll be at home all evening. No, I'm expecting you all. Bye-bye."

She hung up the receiver. "That's Fyfe himself," she told her father. "He must have come in ahead on the morning train. See here, kid," she called out to Miriam on the verandah, "I hope you haven't given Tessie any fool orders about tea. We'll have dinner to-night. The

Bouldings will all be here on their way to Prince Edward Island."

Miriam's expression reflected her surprise and dismay. She put her book away in the library.

Then there were hurryings to and fro, and the brisk ting of the telephone, and re-arrangement of the rooms, and adornment of the verandah, so that the day sped by on eagle's wings. "I'll go down Sparks Street and get some fresh flowers," Pauline said early in the afternoon. "You can't choose them by telephone." Miriam glanced up from the paper she was reading. "There are lots of nasturtiums in the yard."

"Nonsense, nasturtiums! Now you might leave that paper for once, Miriam, and help with things. I'll be back soon. But Tessie may need help."

Tessie did need help. Pauline had not been gone ten minutes when a sharp cry from the pantry sent Miriam's paper flying to the floor while she ran to the scene of the accident. The girl had cut her hand so badly that further help from her was impossible. Weak and pale, she must go to her room to lie down. Miriam was faced with the unfinished dinner. What was keeping Pauline?

She hurried on an apron and cut up the chicken, at which poor Tessie had so blundered. Then she attacked the vegetables. Pauline came in just as she finished, exclaiming at the lateness of the hour.

"Tessie hurt? Oh, the poor creature! I'll go up and see her."

Miriam went in to set the table. It was a very close afternoon and she was tired with the strain and excitement of the last hour. Six places, yes, and everything must be irreproachable. For the Bouldings were accustomed to these things in their own home and must see the Campbells were accustomed to them, too.

Pauline came hurrying down, red and perturbed.

"She's going to sleep, the pain's a little easier. Oh, you set the table! All right, I'll fix the flowers. What an awful mess of things! Why couldn't she be more careful?"

"Was there to be salad, Pauline? I'll try that now."

"Very well, then, Miriam, that's in your line, chopping things up. You really make good mayonnaise. You get it smooth. But for pity's sake don't put in too much mustard. The chicken's all right"—peering into the pot, —"and you've got the vegetables here. Oh, what heat! Keep the pantry-door closed or the dining-room will be scorching. Has the ice-cream come? Well, I'll telephone for *that,* and then I'll get dressed myself, so there'll be one person presentable. It never takes you a minute to dress. You slide into your clothes."

Three-quarters of an hour later Pauline, arrayed in a rose-coloured muslin, rustled down the stairs. "How are you getting on, child? My, what a roaring fire! I'm sure you don't need all that heat. Don't put the oysters in the soup till the last minute. They'll shrivel. It smells as though the peas were burning. You remember you let the turnips burn once, reading Shakespeare. You're getting over that idea that it's learned not to know how to cook vegetables. There's father. For pity's sake, Miriam, get yourself fixed up."

Mr. Campbell came in laggingly, his face very pale, and dropped into his own chair at the table. Pauline called out to him. "Please don't disturb anything, Father. We've had to cook the dinner. Tessie's sick."

"That should not be a hardship for great girls like you. You've done it before."

"Well, it's no fun with three visitors, and in this heat."

"Oh, you don't know what heat is, up here," her father answered wearily.

"I've been in town, too," Pauline assured him. "See the roses? I went away down for them."

He looked at her fresh face and sighed again. These young things did not feel the strain of the weather.

Prancing hoofs on the paved street, a prolonged "Whoa-a!" and Pauline, who was posing on the verandah with one of Miriam's despised books, bounded up with a well-arranged outburst of delight, and charged down the steps, Miriam following deliberately.

A large, much-dressed woman with remarkably raven locks and a prominent nose was delivering herself from the confines of the cab, guarding her gown and backing down so carefully that Pauline's store of exuberant greetings had nearly oozed away before she reached the curb. She atoned for that by flinging her arms around her aunt's neck, but carefully, knowing of old that no fervour of embrace could atone for a disarranged toilette.

The prominent nose brushed against her cheek, and Aunt Victoria enquired, "How are you, Pauline?"

Pauline assured her that she was really awfully well, and pushed Miriam forward to do her duty. Uncle Nathaniel, a pale, nervous man, known as his wife's husband, was paying the cabman, while Fyfe lounged nearby.

Miriam thought, now as always, that he looked just a bigger edition of the boy who had eaten her sweets, and she shook hands with no show of great joy.

"Your mother is away, you say?" Aunt Victoria remarked, ascending the stairs. "Up the Ottawa? Indeed! She did not tell me! Your stair-carpet is wearing very well. I have something like it for my summer home." From Mrs. Boulding's possessive adjectives one would fancy that she lived in solitary state. "And are you managing for yourselves, you girls?"

Pauline told her of the accident, dwelling on her share

in the domestic economy. "And what about Miriam? Is she better at Greek than peeling potatoes?"

Pauline's laugh was a little deprecating. It was not for her to be hard on her sister.

Her Aunt Victoria watched her sharply. "I hope Miriam is not growing up selfish. I remember as a child she was quite greedy over a box of candy."

Just then the dinner-bell sounded. Miriam had the soup on the table.

It was a queer dinner-party. Mr. Campbell, looking very sick, sat at the end of the table trying to take an interest in his brother-in-law's tales of the Western crops; Pauline doing the honours at the other end, divided her smiling personalities; while Miriam was subjected to a gruelling cross-examination by her aunt.

Mrs. Nathaniel Boulding appeared to have some quarrel with higher education. She challenged the right to existence of all institutions of learning. It was effrontery for any young girl to presume to push her studies beyond a certain grade. Was it because her son was always falling before these higher standards? Or did she see that this young college student was judging her cousin with a cool scrutiny which held no admiration? However it was, her Aunt Victoria viewed as both selfish and unmaidenly the spending of money and time in that way, while "dear Pauline, the elder sister," was compelled to stay quietly at home.

Fyfe had one ear open for this conversation. He stole constant glances at her face during the harangue and he seemed to enjoy her discomfiture. What was really worrying Miriam was not her aunt's foolish attack, but the thought of the girl in pain upstairs, the responsibility for the dinner, and especially her father's drawn face. Did none of them see that he looked sick? No, they

seemed quite oblivious to anything but their own conversation.

Mrs. Boulding was describing a function she had attended in Regina. "And Judge Stewart was there, too," she concluded. "I forgot him. Strangely, too, for he was the best-looking man in the room, and he took me out to supper. He was in full Highland toggery—the kilts, you know," with a little nod to Mr. Campbell particularly, as one who was eager for that sort of thing.

"I met him last summer. He *is* fine-looking. I should think he would look splendid in the kilts." This from Miriam.

Pauline suspended operations on her dinner. "Where did *you* meet him?"

"At his brother's home in Cape Breton," Miriam answered simply. "Tom Angus Stewart, you know, father."

"Oh, *Tommy Aonais Bhain* (Tommy, son of fair Angus)," her father rejoined, brightening a little. "Why I had forgotten his brother Hugh was out there—*'Eoghain Dhu'* (Black Hugh) we boys used to call him. A great lad he was. He married a music-teacher."

"He hasn't forgotten you," Miriam remarked. "He's got all sorts of stories about you. His wife *was* a music-teacher. They say she plays beautifully."

Mrs. Boulding, annoyed to find that her distinguished Westerner was common property with a farmer brother, changed the subject abruptly. "How delicious this salad is!" she observed, smiling in Pauline's direction.

Miriam let it pass. If Pauline wanted to claim the honour of the dinner let her have it. So long as it *was* delicious she did not mind.

"And your mother returns on the evening train," Aunt Victoria continued. "She should be in soon now."

Mr. Campbell started, and looked at his watch. "I think you will have to excuse me," he said, and rose from

the table. Then his face turned white and he dropped down into his chair again.

Both girls jumped from their places and ran to him. It was a weak turn, he said, and he felt better when he drank a glass of water.

"It's an awfully close night, don't you know," Fyfe observed, solicitously.

"It certainly is oppressive," Mrs. Boulding concurred.

"If it was the prairies now, you'd have a breeze springing up to cool things off. Great winds there." This from "Nat" Boulding.

"You ought to try a little Scotch, Uncle. Nothing like that for putting ginger into you."

"We'll go out to the verandah," Pauline announced. "Father, you're not going to try to meet that train? Mother can drive up quite easily."

"Certainly Laura can take a carriage," her sister agreed.

"Well, then, I'll lie down," he said, acquiescing.

They trooped out to the verandah, all except Miriam. She followed her father into the library, making him comfortable on the couch.

"Could I bathe your forehead, Father?"

"No, dear, I think not. Perhaps you ought to go out and try to make things pleasant for your aunt. I'll take a little nap, if you leave me."

Very reluctantly the girl withdrew, and, passing around the front of the house, found them all on the side verandah. Fyfe, stretched along the railing, turned his head as she approached.

"Who's the pretty girl across the street?" he asked her.

"Where? Oh, yes, the doctor's daughter, Jessie," Miriam told him. "Shall I call her to come over?"

Pauline frowned menacingly. She was afraid of Fyfe's susceptible heart.

"Oh, not on my account," her cousin yawned. "'Jessie' stirs tender memories, all the same. First money I ever made was on a Lady Jessie. Fine beast she was."

His mother coughed hurriedly to cover his remark.

"You mean the first money you ever lost," his father said, curtly, not being so astute as his wife.

Fyfe laughed lightly at the counter charge. He had moved over and was sitting beside Mr. Boulding on one of the rustic seats, while Pauline, swaying engagingly in the hammock, was carrying on a very confidential chat with her Aunt Victoria.

Miriam looked out through the darkness of the Summer evening. The soft night breeze came in to her, laden with the scent of flowers from the doctor's garden opposite. She thought of Cape Breton. Oh, to be driving on the road by Chursty's now, along the shore of the lake! Would Hugh have got her letter by this time?

A bicycle glided into the shaft of light from the hall-door. Fastening the pedal against the curb, the boy walked up the front steps.

"Telegram!" he said.

There was a movement at the end of the verandah, a rustle and stir, and Pauline, pink and excited, came into view, as Miriam was signing.

"Who's it for?" she demanded.

"For father," Miriam said, turning it over uncertainly.

"He's gone upstairs. Give it here."

"No, he's asleep on the couch. But I don't like to disturb him. He's not well."

"What is it, Miriam?" a voice called from the library. "Bring it to me." Miriam went in reluctantly.

Pauline yawned in the darkness. Then she clicked on

the electric bulb. The yellow light flooded the verandah, dispelling the shadows, and Fyfe Boulding turned his head enquiringly.

"Closing up time?" he drawled. "When does the whistle blow?"

CHAPTER XV: MINGLED YARN

> "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."
>
> —*All's Well That Ends Well,* Act IV, Sc. 3.

"That's the last of this college business for Miriam," Pauline remarked. "I hope she understands that." She looked towards her sister aggressively. "Now don't go into the sulks over it," she added.

September was nearly over and still the father lay in his room, weak and sick and spiritless. His long struggle through the dog-days had been unnerving and the shock of the bank failure involving the savings of a lifetime had completely prostrated him. Now, by the physician's orders, he was faced with an indefinite period of idleness. With no salary and no savings the fortunes of the Campbell family must suffer a severe reversal. Their home must be sold, later, when Mr. Campbell could be moved. Meantime the question of Miriam's education was to the fore.

Mrs. Campbell had grown morbid since the night that her holiday had been ironically climaxed by her husband's illness. She looked at her daughter tearfully.

"College fees and poverty do not consort well with one another, Miriam."

"I wish we had the money father put into them last year," Pauline pursued.

Miriam spoke. "In one way we have. I never would have got into kindergarten without my college standing; there are so many applicants."

Plainly this was news. That Miriam was provided for,

that she could so coolly view the prospect of breaking up her whole course, came as a great surprise. Pauline became promptly suspicious.

"You can't save and go to college later. If that's her idea, Mother, you'd better tell her to give it up. Miriam will simply live on the excitement of college at some future glorious day, and go around working, strained and feverish, and living an unnatural life. Besides, Miriam, you'll have to give your money to the family."

"What are *you* going to do, Pauline?" her sister asked, directly.

Pauline assumed her important look. "I expect I'll be needed at home for the present," she conceded. "I haven't made any definite plans for later."

"In any case, girls," Mrs. Campbell roused herself to say, "there is no need of discussing our family affairs with outsiders. As for the kindergarten, Miriam, I quite approve of it for you, meantime. You have had the year of Kingston, in any case."

And then came Uncle Owen's letter. Would Miriam ever forget that morning? How the sun can break through a bank of storm-clouds heaped-up, impenetrable, and with its golden darts shatter them to fragments!

Miriam must finish her course at the University. This was her uncle's fiat. Looking at the matter merely from a business standpoint, as he said, a little money invested now in enabling her to graduate would yield far greater returns later. Moreover, it was a pity to deprive her of an experience which would be such an asset in the building up of her character, and which she evidently appreciated and profited by. She must make her home with them. They were lonely with no young people. As for the fees, he had a nomination available this year. He enclosed a liberal cheque for travelling and outfitting.

"Uncle Owen is an old dear!" said Pauline. "But he

has the same exalted notion of college that every Queen's person has. When has your character developed so marvellously, Miriam?"

"I dislike accepting Owen's offer," the mother protested. "It puts me under an obligation."

"No, it is we who are generous in parting with Miriam," the father had returned.

This was the conversation which Miriam was recalling that Autumn afternoon. She was walking along the lakeshore in the glow of sunset. Maple leaves, riotously tinted, carpeted the walks. Summer was going out in a great passion of colour.

She did not know that her eyes reflected the beauty of sky and lake, that the purity of her thought was mirrored in her face. But she felt a sudden pleasure that the one who joined her at this moment had himself known scenes of beauty.

Hugh Stewart's quick smile showed his interest in the meeting.

"Isn't this lake glorious?" she said.

He fell into step beside her. "Isn't it? Almost as glorious as the Little Bras d'Or."

"I suppose you really put the Bras d'Or ahead of Lake Ontario," she mused.

"Not at all. It's there by divine right of creation."

"Because it's in Cape Breton?"

"Well, that's no drawback," he retorted.

"No, it's an advantage."

"Thank you."

"Oh, *you* mustn't answer for the whole island, Mr. Stewart. My forefathers came from there, too. But of course I claim Ottawa, because it is my birthplace."

"Poor Ottawa," he said. "It has a good deal to answer for."

She flashed around at him. "Aren't you horrid!"

Hugh laughed immoderately. "You didn't get down this Summer," he went on, his eyes still dancing.

"No, I was at home." The remembrance of that trying Summer and their altered circumstances made her sigh involuntarily.

"Father has been very ill," she added, hesitatingly.

Hugh had evidently heard nothing about it, for he expressed genuine concern. "I was teaching at Lake Ainslie most of the time and I didn't get to hear your folks' news. I hope he's all right now."

"Oh, he's not strong. He can't do any work for some months." She was silent a moment, then suddenly she said, "I very nearly stayed away from college this year."

"Oh, we couldn't get along without you," Hugh teased, failing to catch the serious note in her voice.

"I don't know about that," she said. "I'm sure I didn't want to stay away myself, but it was a question of being able to afford it."

"Oh? How was that?" He looked at her in some bewilderment.

"Why, didn't you hear about father's loss?"

"No, we were never hearing a word down at the Lake, whatever."

"Why father lost every dollar he had ever saved in that Canadian Bank."

"Is that so?" Hugh exclaimed in genuine concern. "Well, I'm awfully sorry!"

They walked along in silence. The sunset glow was fading from the sky. They had reached the park now and turned up Barrie Street.

"Are you boarding at the same place this year?" he asked her.

"No, I'm staying with my uncle."

"That's fine. You'll be doing great work there."

"I don't know that I will. It's almost too comfortable

for studying." She slackened her pace as they reached a large brick house. Hugh, glancing up, saw the brass plate, "Dr. Owen Danvers," on the door of the wing. "I never knew just where Dr. Danvers lived," he remarked. "It's a splendid house. The Meds. think everything of him," he added.

"Well, I must go on," he said a moment later. "I hope your father will get along all right."

"Oh, yes, thank you. He's better in the cool weather. That heat was too much for him. I used to think of Cape Breton sometimes——"

She stopped short, remembering the long letter written to Hugh on one of those stifling days, and which he had never answered.

Hugh interpreted her silence in quite another way, and imagining that she felt badly about her father he lifted his hat to say good-bye. He had hardly taken three strides up the street, however, when he suddenly turned back.

"Miss Campbell, just a moment!"

Miriam had run up the verandah steps. It was dusk now, and the light streamed out from the drawing-room window behind her. She turned at his voice. "Yes, did you want me?" she said, hesitating. He was surely going to mention the letter now.

Hugh came up below her as she stood on the steps. "Oh, I'm after forgetting that I have a parcel for you," he exclaimed.

"Oh, have you? From whom?"

"Whom do you think?"

"Aunt Hannah?"

"No, from Christy."

"What, *Chursty Ian Bhain* (Christy, daughter of fair John)?" Hugh had given the English pronunciation out of courtesy to Miriam. Miriam glibly used the Gaelic phrase. "Whatever did she send me?"

"I think puddings, though I didn't open the parcel."

Miriam's look of horror was a treat to him.

"You would surely smell them! *Maragan* (Puddings)!"

He choked with laughter. "I'll bring them round tomorrow evening, if you're free."

"All right, thanks. I'd like to see what's inside, anyway. I mean, of the parcel."

The door had opened behind Miriam as she spoke, but she did not notice it. Cora was in the vestibule, drawing on her gloves. Her eyes pounced on the pair standing by the steps. She noticed Hugh's fine proportions, the poise of his head. And the easy smile with which he looked up at Miriam was not lost on her.

"Ah, ha! Miriam!" she said suddenly, as Hugh turned away for the second time, "I've caught you at it now, spooning on the steps. Wait till I tell your aunt."

"I didn't see you there!" Miriam said, not finding other words at the moment. She was afraid Hugh had overheard the remark.

"Of course you didn't," Cora laughed. "You had eyes for no one else. Who is he, anyway? I've seen him somewhere!"

"It's Hugh Stewart from Cape Breton," Miriam said honestly.

"Oh, and Scotch whateffer," Cora mimicked. "My prither Tonald spokes ta Gaelic as mucht as I and twicet as more."

"It doesn't concern any one how my friends speak," said Miriam, sharply. "And I can talk to whom I like, here."

"Oh, can you? Really! I was under the impression that Sedley's parents were taking you in for the winter—most uncalled-for benevolence. But you seem to have an-

nexed the whole establishment and entertain your country bumpkins out here in the dark quite brazenly."

Cora swept down the steps as she spoke. Miriam turned towards the door. The Highland blood in her veins was boiling at Cora's insinuation that Sedley's parents were giving her board and lodging free. Yet it was foolish, she knew, to indulge a moment's concern over anything Cora might say. Those who heard and apparently subscribed to her tirades were as likely as not to vent their spleen on her when she was out of hearing. Miriam's conclusion was supported that very evening. She was deep in her books when the little maid knocked at her door. "Miss Miriam, there's a young lady downstairs to see you. Your aunt says will I show her up?"

"Yes, show her up, please." Miriam tucked some papers out of sight and closed her cupboard door. She knew her friend's ferret eyes.

That young lady appeared a moment later. "Well, you look comfortable. I wouldn't do a thing if I had a room like this. Lucky for you your cousins got married. Isn't his wife a gay one? They say he's home alone half the time, when he isn't at his office." Her glance travelled round the room again. "Sometimes I think I'll leave my boarding-house, only for my brother, and then the board's good. Always go where men are boarding if you want a hot supper."

"But say, Miss Campbell, what I came about is this: You know the Duke of York's coming?"

"Yes, I know. The day after to-morrow, isn't it?"

"Yes. Well, did you notice the Senate's bulletin-board this afternoon? You didn't. Why, there's a notice posted up as to how we're to behave and dress and all that. And the dictum is that no student is to take part in the procession without academic attire."

"And that's right, too," Miriam interposed. "But we haven't got mortar-boards."

"No. We should have had them long ago. But we can't get them here, and it's too late to send away. What can we do?"

"Make them," said Miriam, briefly.

"You're not in earnest?"

"I certainly am. Wait till I get on my things and we'll visit some of the professors' wives."

The upshot of the visit was the daring scheme, which provided every one of the hundred and thirty girls, and thirty ushers, with a regulation college cap in the short space of one day. Elizabeth as an enthusiastic graduate and clever needlewoman was pressed into service. She went with Miriam and the Minerva president down town and helped them order buckram, a bolt of black cloth, and a hundred and sixty squares of heavy cardboard.

At noon Miriam snatched a hasty bite. At supper-time she was equally brief, and not until a quarter past eleven did her perturbed Aunt Ellen hear her quick footfall on the steps outside.

"My dear child, what has kept you?"

Miriam took off her hat and pinned on a neat mortar-board. "Every girl in college has one," she exclaimed in jubilation, "and thirty men, and one professor. We got Davie's cap for a pattern, and one girl cut cloth and one buckram for the bands, and then we set each girl to make her own. They're all finished. Just wait till to-morrow, Aunt Ellen. I'm awfully sorry to keep you up so late, but this is a very special occasion."

"There's been some one else waiting for you," her aunt chided, "a very nice young man who brought a parcel and was most disappointed to find you out."

"Hugh Stewart?"

"You seem in no doubt about the name," her aunt teased.

Miriam's expression was most contrite.

"Oh, I forgot entirely," she cried. "Never mind, he'll forgive me when he hears of our great achievement. Where's the parcel, Aunt Ellen? Was it strong?"

"Strong? What do you mean?"

Miriam tore off the paper and disclosed a pair of great knitted mitts in bright red, blue and yellow.

"The poor soul! Just look, Aunty! From Chursty."

"Well, indeed," her aunt said, knowingly. "That is a labour of love, if she made them herself. You'll never be able to wear them, though. Come now, my dear girl, off to bed. Your Uncle went into the hospital to see the Principal to-night."

"The dear Principal!" Miriam exclaimed. "How is he?"

"Just lying there, within sight and sound of all the preparations for the Duke of York, and worrying his soul out."

"Well, he need not do that!" the girl exclaimed. "The decorations are just perfect. There's a magnificent arch of maple leaves over the main entrance to the campus, that is simply gorgeous. The grounds are in the pink of condition, every one is working tirelessly. And even our mortar-boards will give an added touch. I wish Uncle would keep assuring Principal Grant that he mustn't *think* of worrying."

Her aunt was smiling gently. But she shook her head. "I'm sure the Principal knows that you won't leave anything undone, that you will give him no cause for shame. It is not that at all, Miriam. What is worrying the Principal is another kind of decoration—the C.M.G."

"Well, that needn't concern him either. It was an-

nounced on the Senate's bulletin-board that he was to receive it."

"But, my dear, you do not seem to understand. The Principal does not want to receive it. There's the rub."

The young girl stood dumbfounded.

"You see, Miriam, such honours and titles, the Principal contends, should not be accepted by a minister. He is the Reverend George Munro Grant, you know."

"So, won't he?"

"Oh, he cannot refuse. And your Uncle, and other friends, are urging him to view this honour in the light of a recognition of the work of the University, whose Principal he is."

"I see." Miriam spoke slowly, light dawning for her on realms undreamed-of. "He would rather be called 'Principal' than 'Doctor Grant,' even though it represented a dozen degrees, and I do believe he would rather be called 'Geordie' than anything."

It was on a golden October morning, with a fresh breath in the air, that a long line of girl students, in proper academic garb, moved out from the cloistered shades of the old Arts Building and across the campus. The trees still held their gold and crimson foliage.

Hugh Stewart had been chosen as one of the ushers on account of his physique. It was not an unmixed joy. What better discipline for thirty young disciples of Hercules and Adonis than to be forced to don a girl-made mortar-board? Yet as the men filed out on the green they made a brave display.

"There go the girls," said one. "Don't they look all right, though. Poor Geordie, he would enjoy seeing them. Did you hear about the Duke visiting him at the hospital? He's got the C.M.G., all right. 'I've brought you this from the King,' the Duke of York said as he went into the ward."

"Well, here's to His Royal Highness! May he live to be King! But Geordie's a king forever (after the order of Melchisedec).

"'Rule, rule, Geordie! Geordie rules the boys.
Oh, what a happy man is Geordie!'"

CHAPTER XVI: WHO SELLS ETERNITY?

"Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?"

—*Lucrece.*

SEDLEY DANVERS sat by the grate-fire in his back parlor, pretending to read. Outside, clouds of snow came stinging against the window, and the drifts swirled and scudded up the streets in a weird, uncanny fashion.

Contrasted with the wildness of the night, the scene within was one of peace. Yet as he gazed from his book into the glowing coals, the young lawyer's face showed lines of strain. In the depths of his eyes trouble had come to lodge. He closed the book and faced his thoughts. No longer could he evade the truth. What was patent to those who knew his home life best must be acknowledged by himself, the chief actor in the drama. His marriage was a hideous blunder.

A blunder? For most blunders there was a remedy, a time of restitution. For this there was none. This was a tragedy.

He had hoped so much and so long. He had tried his very best and utmost to redeem the situation, to make out of the given elements a union true and helpful. That he had failed he knew. But still he must live out his life.

How to do it? How to make some worthy contribution to the world before the candle of his little life should have burnt to its socket? How to do this when the one to whom he was linked was so utterly unworthy?

Had he ever really loved her? How then had he yielded

to the infatuation, if it were merely such? He had always prided himself on his powers of discernment. He delighted in uncovering the defects of his fellows in the same way that he tenderly laid bare their secret virtues. Why had he not discovered, before he sought to win her, just how fleeting were her charms, how thin her life-blood, how distorted her vision?

His fault, he knew it well, had lain in a large tolerance, an ease purchased dear, at the cost of a lifetime of happiness. He had not concerned himself deeply enough with this important step. In his broad outlook he had classed Cora's faults as foibles, her external attractions as fundamental virtues, and had drifted into her mesh with the charming negligence which characterised all his movements. It was *le défaut de son qualité,* this tolerance, and, though it won him hosts of friends and a pleasant time in life, at least until now, he saw at last how it had stood in his way at college, yielding a second rank to one whose brain powers claimed a first, how it had militated against him in his profession, keeping him in a small aimless circle, when with effort he might have forged ahead into the public life of the day, and now, how it had doomed his domestic happiness. Too late he had discovered his great mistake.

Not that he presumed to arrogate to himself all goodness. Far, far from it. He was just as conscious of his defects as though Cora had never dwelt on them. But this at least he felt. He could admire virtues in others. He recognised goodness, he loved gentleness of spirit, he worshipped sincerity, in whatsoever life he found these qualities enshrined. But Cora was so concerned with her particular schemes, her private grudges and gossips, that the over-world of goodness made its appeal in vain.

But if this were all! Sedley's brow knitted as he recalled looks, queries and half-concealed remarks which

had floated around him in this long year of married life. What had they meant if not that his world, their world, scorned her and pitied him? Pitied him! The young man's cheek took on a dull, red glow. How his proud spirit rebelled against pity! Yet there it was. The very atmosphere in which he moved with Cora was charged with it. And well he knew the reason. Cora was his only in name. Her restless scrutiny of the crowd, in the hope of discovering some new affinity, her extravagant smile at some recent annexation, her ill-concealed flirtations behind her husband's back, what man could shield these from the vulgar gaze? Sedley had tried by animation, kindness and astuteness to do so. Cora had foiled his best endeavours.

So long as her looks went everywhere he could stand it. But when whispers reached even his seclusion of the coupling of one name with his wife's, he felt that matters must come to an issue. Never could he forget that awful evening when he had nerved himself to speak of this to his wife. He could not soon forget her laugh, high, sharp and strained, nor the way she had feigned to treat it all as "the most absurd joke of the season. Too good to keep."

At that Sedley's blood had boiled, sudden and fierce. And he had forbidden her to repeat one word of their conversation. Cora had pretended to mock at his emphasis, to pooh-pooh the whole episode, but her keen glance had read determination in his eye, and she had lapsed into sullenness instead.

He had long since given up remonstrance or appeal. He had tried to live his simple, decent life, and to help her where he could to do the same. Wedded bliss was not for them. Sedley thought grimly of his boyish determination to marry his sister Elizabeth, failing her, some

one just like her, just as radiant, just as good. He had not realised just how high were his standards.

He glanced at the clock uncertainly, then at his watch. Cora had been out for tea, was evidently intending to spend the evening out as well. For himself he could not stand a moment more of this deserted house which the storm rendered still drearier. With no definite aim, but with determination in every move, he strode into the hall, donned his overcoat and went out.

The snow swirled and cut around him, but he liked to breast its worst. He had turned, as though lured, through the park, and was making straight for the scene of his academic exploits. The far-off twinkling lights of the University buildings, like so many fairy fingers, beckoned him through the storm.

The heavy door of the old Arts building resounding behind him, admitted him to a very haven of calm. The still air laid a quieting hand on his nerves. The wide halls and stairs where the echo of his footfalls penetrated the empty lecture-rooms, lifted the strain from his mind. High fancies, firm thoughts seemed to move about in those spaces as though an unseen company were still abroad. He had slipped into the honour Greek room and sat alone in its shadows. Could he hear as of old the sonorous tones of the lecturer, could he know again the pleasures of those gems of classic lore, their flowing lines, their chaste and lofty diction, dignified, pure, aloof?

Another sound crept into his consciousness. Faintly at first, arrestingly, yes, unmistakably, from far up above, came the muffled roars of applause, the stamping of feet, applauding voices, gales of laughter. Something was transpiring in Convocation Hall. A couple of belated students springing up the stairs confirmed his suspicion. In their company he would be less conspicuous. For the

desire was strong on him to taste again some of the students' delights.

A burst of warmth and light and activity rushed out to greet him as the door of old Convocation Hall swung open. Up and down the platform marched a strange figure, crying in weird crescendo,

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!
Was Bessie at the rink to-day?"

Not an inch of room available! Obeying an ancient impulse, Sedley scaled the gallery steps in a twinkling and let himself in at the rear of that densely-packed eminence. What was this? Lady students, lady students only!

In an instant he saw that happy chance had led him into the very middle of a Mock Trial, staged for the benefit of the Alma Mater society. They were craning their necks to follow the proceedings of the Breach of Promise case. The highly-coloured data were further enlivened by local hits.

"My Lord, may I draw your attention to Mr. Hugh Stewart? In the next five minutes he is about to laugh!" Every one turns to look at Hugh, in the middle of the hall, serious as the judge himself. The idea of his laughing seems as remote as next Christmas.

But all of a sudden Hugh does it. He shouts out so noisily and suddenly that he startles himself with the rest. A roar of laughter runs across the room.

"Silence in the Court!" thunders the judge. The sabres of the twenty special constables crash in corroboration.

"My Lord, I wish to call your attention to the presence of a traitor in the centre of the gallery. As subtly as possible he has made his entrance and has ensconced himself in the very heart of youth and beauty."

A cheer goes up from the audience. Every eye that

can manage it is focussed on the gallery. Every girl in the gallery looks around at Sedley. Nothing but Sedley's sheer delight in the old flavour of it all could have induced any man to keep that place.

And Miriam in the very front row of the gallery was looking around at him in consternation. To her this was a *contretemps* with no visible means of extrication.

Sedley knew that the only solution was to divert attention. He was up in a moment.

"Your Honour, I am a special detective employed by the Court to trace the footprints in the snow at the time of the accident. May I direct your Lordship's attention to the remarkably large feet exhibited in the front row of the gallery?"

A burst of amusement from below! Every girl had tucked her feet underneath her skirts—every girl but Miriam. Was Sedley going to work his jokes on *her?*

"My Lord!" he began again in his best counsel's tones, "may I call the attention of the Court to the pair of number eights still in evidence?"

Down shot Miriam's feet! Ripples of merriment!

The next moment a piercing shriek brought every girl's heart into her mouth. A woman in the front seat of the ground floor had fainted.

"A doctor! Is there a doctor in the audience?"

The cry of distress, the agitation of the bench, the excitement of the Court provided excellent cover under which Sedley made his escape. He reached the bottom stair just in time to see the dummy "lady," her wig askew, likewise her sofa-cushion padding, carried out by an exact reproduction of the Dean of the Medical Faculty.

The "lady" and the "Doctor" were unmasking at the foot of the stairs when Sedley slipped past.

"Was that the guy in the gallery?"

"Yes, Danvers, the Dean's son. Smooth, isn't he?"

"I should say so! I thought at first it was part of the game."

"Not a bit of it. He spoke on the spur of the moment. He's clever!"

The words echoed in Sedley's ears as he let himself out into the storm. It was wilder than ever, but he liked it so. Snow and wind and sleet—let them rave! Braving them brought a satisfactory feeling of energy and strength.

CHAPTER XVII: CHEERLY SEEK REDRESS

"Wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms."
—*Henry IV*, Part II, Act V, Sc. 4.

Elizabeth, at one end of her mother's polished dining-table, poured cups of tea with marvellous celerity, passing them to the rainbow of pretty girls assisting, exchanging pleasantries the while and kindly greetings with the throngs passing through the large rooms. Mrs. Owen Danvers was giving a long-owed "Come all ye," and every one in Kingston was bidden.

Miriam Campbell, the pink tint in the rainbow, flashed in and out among the guests. She was tired from her long year's hard study, but the comfort and care of her aunt's house had brought her through until this, the middle of May, with a good record at examinations behind her. She must stay with them all Summer, her aunt said. Her secret hope was that she might earn some money in the holidays, if only her mother would consent to her teaching in the West.

A pair of round blue eyes glancing out from beneath a gay turban drew the girl's attention towards the alcove in the hall. Behold little Mrs. Dan Rutherford squeezed behind a tall dame, but beaming cheerily over a Japanese cup, while she picked salted almonds out of her saucer with pudgy, white-gloved fingers. She nodded mysteriously and emphatically to Miriam, who, concluding she must want the macaroons, slipped through with infinite difficulty and brought up finally beside Mrs. Dan.

"Won't you have some?" she asked hesitatingly, and the entire group indulged. They were in no hurry to go, these guests. Mrs. Danvers' repasts were always sumptuous, and she had given no reception for a long time.

"How are the boys, and Vivian?" Miriam asked.

Mrs. Dan laid a white-gloved hand on the young girl's arm, impressively. "Elmer has sprained his wrist," she announced. "At first we thought it might be merely a twist, but——" she shook her head sagely. "It's an out-and-out sprain," she concluded. "Oh, we fixed up splints and put it in a sling. He'll be all right." She paused a moment, to secure another almond. "Vivian got a nasty scratch from the cat, right across the forehead," she remarked, brightening suddenly.

"Well, how unfortunate they seem to be!"

Mrs. Rutherford nodded. From one point of view her children's ailments were gratifying, in that they furnished an exciting topic of conversation. "Oh, well," she continued, philosophically, "Claude is all right again. We had his adenoids removed, you know," nodding back towards the surgery. "He keeps his mouth shut, sleeping, now. I'm watching Vivian very closely. I *rather* think that it is adenoids with her, if I'm not very much mistaken."

She looked so shrewd that Miriam gave her own mouth a sudden snap. What a terrible little woman to be poking over you asleep, trying to prove you ready for an operation!

A curious amalgam of social and maternal concern, Mrs. Rutherford was ambitious also for her children's education. Having shrewdly observed a certain family of repute, whose pale-haired children were daily taken walking by their governess, Mrs. D. Webster Rutherford, as her calling-cards now described her, had decided that

Claude, Elmer and Vivian must have a governess of their own.

It was an inspiration to have thought of Miriam Campbell. She was a third year student, very well connected, but needing funds for college fees. She was the very one. They would be generous in their remuneration and she might be induced to remain for the winter. Mrs. Rutherford grasped the happy chance that had brought them together and propounded her scheme to Miriam.

At first it seemed preposterous. Then amusing, possible, advantageous. A feeling of false pride or worthy independence no doubt impelled the final view and led Miriam to close with the offer.

"Well, I'll try it, Mrs. Rutherford," she said, just as suddenly as her mind reached its decision. There was more of a heroic ring in her voice than she realised.

When Sedley heard of it he was quite put out. He met Miriam, a fortnight later, coming from the post office. A stout boy, done into a sailor suit, was walking at either side of her. She saw him coming, a block away, strolling along the shady street with head half-bent. The old city lay a-dreaming in the June afternoon.

"This is a new rôle for you," he said with his quick smile. "What put this notion in your head?"

"I had to do something," Miriam answered in the direct way with which she always met his questions. "I couldn't stay on at Uncle Owen's indefinitely."

"Why not?"

In his presence she could not hint at charity. "I'm enjoying it," she protested. "I really didn't think I would, at first. But they're so very kind, and these are two bright boys." She gave a squeeze to two podgy hands whose owners gazed up at her in round-eyed admiration.

Sedley laughed at the pair in his kindly way. He had

lost the note of jubilation. There was a hint of disappointment in his tone and expression. And yet she felt the kindliness, the warmth of his sympathy, as never before. "I'm glad you're so happy," he said. "I was sceptical, I confess, when I heard of the arrangement. Do you make time, with all your new duties, for learning poetry?"

"I keep that for a treat," she told him. "I've been learning Browning's *'Saul.'* "

He listened half-smiling. He hardly seemed to know what she said, or else he was watching her say them, rather than following her words. "Yes?" he commented pleasantly, when she stopped. Then, a moment later, "I don't seem to read much poetry myself, these days."

His own words recalled him. "Well, I must not keep you, Miriam. You will want to get your little charges home." He lifted his hat as they moved apart. "Go often to see Father and Mother," he said with sudden earnestness. Then, smiling brightly, turned away.

It had not taken Miriam all these months to learn that Sedley had committed an irretrievable mistake. Gossiping tongues, her own native sense, stray words from Tom, all threw light on a subject never openly broached in the family connection. Sedley, himself, must know it all too well. How could he be so gentle, so serene?

The little boys' tongues were loosened by the trip down town. Claude was reflecting on their governess' complimentary remarks.

"I'll bet you Baby won't be a bright boy when she goes to school."

"She'll be a girl," Elmer retorted.

"She'll be a dunce fool," said Claude. Then, "What's your name?" he propounded.

"Billy MacLean," Elmer promptly responded.

"Where do you live?" "Down the lane."
"What's your number?" "Cu-cumber!"
"What do you do?" "Chase the school!"
"What do you sit on?" "Two little stools."
"What do they look like?" "Two little fools."
"All into plum-pudding and pie!"

They brought on the final course with such gusto that Miriam jumped and squealed exactly as though she herself were about to be chopped to mincemeat, to help out the supply. This greatly delighted the boys, and they came to their house in such evident good spirits that their mother, fussing with Vivian's carriage on the side verandah, exulted over her governess.

"Up to the bathroom, boys, and wash your hands before nursery tea——" a new institution. "There's a letter for you, Miss Campbell. Didn't I see 'Regina' on the post-mark? My old music-teacher is married out there—Mrs. Judge Stewart. But of course you wouldn't know any one of *that* name." Oh, how round and "poppy" were the eyes fixed on her! It was just as though she had read through the envelope.

What was the use of dissembling? Miriam opened the envelope and glanced casually at the signature. Then she raised her calm, pleasant gaze to the little "Poll Pry." "This is from Hugh Stewart, all right. Your 'Mrs. Judge' must be his aunt. I know his uncle. He *is* a Judge."

"I thought so," very wisely. "There's a family resemblance. Something about the forehead. She was always very tony. Her rates were the highest in town." She glanced corroboratively down at her own stubby fingers, as though one might expect to see music exuding from the tips. "I want Vivian to 'take.' Poor Vivian, it's quite a time ahead just yet. So your letter is from the young man, himself, is it? Well, I won't disturb

you then. Perhaps you can move Vivian back and forth while you read. She's fussy with her teeth."

Mrs. Rutherford, who was fussy even apart from her teeth, and who would be at a loss the day that Vivian's set of these convenient scapegoats was complete, trotted indoors with a secret glance of interest over her shoulder at the young governess who was tearing open the envelope in evident excitement.

It was like a cool Western breeze to read that long letter from Hugh Stewart away out in Regina.

"Dear Miss Campbell:

"Many thanks for your most interesting letter which came to me this morning. The fact that it was written one year ago gives it an historic value which it could not possibly have had if its course had not been intercepted. Now I can understand how my last letter to you remained so long unanswered. I analysed every word and sentence in that letter many times since, wondering what I had said that offended you. I finally came to the conclusion that you had suddenly and definitely decided to discontinue the correspondence without any word of explanation. Needless to say I was grieved and disappointed, and in the circumstances did not feel like forcing my correspondence on any one. But in the light of this morning's revelation my wonder is that you could have been civil to me all last Winter after my apparent discourtesy. Your goodness of heart alone was security against that, and I write to ask your forgiveness for what Hugh Stewart the cooper is partly responsible for. The cooper, you may remember, lives on the rear of our farm where we picked the blackberries. My letter from you was handed to him. Failing to make out an order for tubs or barrels in your reference to the 'woods,' he placed it under the old clock, and there it remained until it

dawned upon some friend of theirs recently, who was given the task of interpreting it, in the light of the cooper's trade, that it might have been meant for me. That it has been a circular letter adds to its interest today and I hope that this explanation will find you enjoying the Summer in the old Limestone city.

"We would give a great deal for the old Ontario strand out here. We miss the trees and the water. But there is something exhilarating about the atmosphere of this country. It is a shade lonely in contrast with the jolly days of college and an annual letter tends to make it more so. But there is an air of hopefulness and progress that makes it fascinating for a young man. The people are from Ontario and the East and some from the Old Country. They are friendly and sociable and I should be glad to think of living here always.

"Congratulations on your work of last Winter. I saw by the *Whig* of your high standing. I am enjoying the work here very much. There is no other man of my name in town, unless you address me as 'Judge.' I shall look forward to seeing you in the Fall.

"Yours very sincerely,

"HUGH STEWART."

A slow smile drew around the corners of Miriam's mouth as she read. She pushed the carriage back and forth automatically, but her thoughts were with a young law student in far-off Regina. Yes, she would answer his letter. It gave her a certain pleasure to plan what she would say. Only she must wait for a time. Why? Oh, well, it would not do to seem too glad to hear from him. It was a good thing to keep a man in suspense as to whether or not you wanted to be good friends. Not too long, of course, but long enough to make him anxious and very much relieved when the strain was at an end.

All the same it was pleasant to hear from him, pleasant, too, to think that there was still a year of college life with all its opportunities for friendship.

The Summer passed in a golden dream. She had not expected such happiness as those drowsy days in the University city brought her. Her duties were light, her temporary home very pleasant and she spent long hours with the children in country walks, in Macdonald park, out on the lake, or walking right into the heart of the sunset, repeating sometimes to herself, sometimes to the boys, bits of poetry and sentences that had caught her fancy in her college work or private reading during those strenuous days of study, when she could not afford time to give rein to her erring fancy. Now she steeped her soul in their beauty, now she lived them in the glories of sky, and lake, in waving branch, in exquisite flower. The sensuous passion of Shelley, the haunting music of Keats, the pure vision of Tennyson, the intimate note of Wordsworth, she dwelt on them one by one. So she grew in sun and shower like a veritable child of nature, until into her eyes there came the silence and the calm which mute, insensate things lend to those who watch and receive. Physically, as well as mentally, she was developing, and little Mrs. Dan, whose round eyes missed no detail near them, beheld with mingled feelings her unfolding grace and dignity. She was proud of the girl's growing loveliness, but she was afraid that she would lose her governess.

CHAPTER XVIII: VIRTUE IS BEAUTY

> "In nature there's no blemish but the mind;
> None can be called deformed but the unkind:
> Virtue is beauty."
>
> —*Twelfth Night,* Act III, Sc. 4.

Cora tossed the letter into her husband's lap. "It's from your precious cousin, Pauline! She thinks October a charming month for a visit to Kingston. She'll expect all manner of fuss to be made over her. Where am I going to get the coin for an afternoon tea? We owe the butcher three or four months back and the milkman's boy tried to get saucy this morning, because I couldn't pay for the tickets again!"

Sedley's face took on that look of quiet which it always assumed on these frequent family scenes. It was useless to ask Cora about the money which was meant to meet these bills. It would be the invariable response. *She* never saw it. She had hardly seen the colour of money since she was married.

"When is Pauline coming?" he asked, quietly.

"This week—Friday noon, unless I telegraph her to the contrary, which I have every notion of doing. Mean little cat to come spying around here to see just how hard up we are! And Miss Pauline will not appear in the garb of poor relation, mind you. Who asked her anyway? It must have been in one of your fits of cousinly affection that you grew so generous with your invitations."

Sedley crossed his feet, uncrossed them and folded the paper carefully. It was hard to answer her civilly.

"For mercy's sake stop rustling that paper, Sedley. It sets my nerves jumping. Well, can't you speak? What are we to do?"

He rose slowly and as if wearied. "You can have some money, Cora, if you're so hard pressed. Of course Pauline must come. You'll make it go as far as you can, won't you? Things have been rather dull this Summer." He paused a moment, then—"How much do you owe the milkman?"

She told him, defiantly, and he counted out the amount from his pocket-book. "I'll send the butcher a cheque," he said slowly. "We must not let things get so far in arrears."

Cora, slightly mollified at the sight of the bills, which she did not intend the milkman to have, began to talk volubly of an elaborate "At Home" for Pauline to be given the day after her arrival. "I owe every one anyway," Cora said, "and I might as well pay back when she's here. Every one will ask her afterwards. It's just the season and it will keep her going, and give her a chance to show off her clothes."

"Of course if you really feel you need to return invitations," Sedley put in, "it's all right. But I'm afraid you'll come short before you're through. I really cannot draw any more just now."

"Oh, well, we'll make a dash to begin with," Cora decreed. "Nothing like first impressions, you know, especially with people like the Campbells."

And Cora was the very one to gratify these weaknesses. Pauline was met at the junction on Friday noon by a cab with two prancing steeds and a driver in livery.

"I wouldn't be bothered with that abominable little side line," she declared, as she ushered Pauline into the cab in full sight of the other passengers. "Drive right up to the house, Coachman!"

Pauline's shrewd eyes, which had noted every detail of the other girl's attire, scrutinised the driver in sudden consternation lest he should prove to be a veritable family retainer. She scanned the sidewalks on either side, on the lookout as always for any familiar face of masculine persuasion. But those Kingston streets at noon hour furnished very few faces of any description.

"I haven't been in Kingston since Elizabeth was married," Pauline announced. "Is this where you live, Cora? What a cute house!"

"Yes, pretty fair." Cora gathered up her skirts to alight. "At least it will do till we build."

"Are you going to?" sharply.

"Oh, eventually," Cora answered, safely enough. "That will do, Coachman. I may want you to drive us out this afternoon. I'll let you know, later, however."

"Very good, Mrs. Danvers." He touched his whip to his hat with respect born of the knowledge that Dr. Owen Danvers was behind the long bill at the livery stable.

"Well, Pauline," Sedley began, as soon as they were seated at the dainty luncheon which the grocer and butcher had obligingly furnished, "I suppose you're all eagerness to see that young sister of yours."

"Who? Miriam? I should say so! I've got several messages for that young lady from mother."

"I suppose you have—not having seen her for so long."

"Oh, not the kind you mean, Sedley. I can tell you mother is hopping mad at the way Miriam has acted."

Sedley turned in pretended amazement. "What has she done?"

"Why, gone to take care of a brood of youngsters, at that impudent little woman's, Mrs. Dan Rutherford's. She forced her way into our house one Sunday night,

and stayed so late that mother had to literally push her out."

"Actually!" Sedley exclaimed. Cora laughed shrilly at the description. She and Pauline were on common ground now.

"Tell me, Sedley," Pauline continued, her mouth full of lettuce, "is Miriam still with that litter?"

"Litter!" Cora shrilled. "Of course she is. But, my dear, don't forget our relationship to the Rutherfords." She threw a sharp glance towards her husband.

"Oh, I'm not forgetting that," Pauline nodded, attacking her bread and butter, "but I always said Elizabeth was too good for that Tom Rutherford, English master and all the rest of it."

"Professor of English," Sedley corrected, a gleam of amusement in his eyes. "Didn't you hear he had been appointed assistant lecturer at the college?"

No, this was news to Pauline. "Sedley talks as though he were raised to the peerage," Cora interjected. "There's a certain class of people in Kingston, you know," she explained tolerantly to Pauline, "who speak of professors with bated breath. Fame can rise no higher. 'He's a professor at the college,' they whisper, and you see aureoles floating in the air. Have some olives?" She stretched her long neck in exaggerated unconcern, and extended the silver dish at the end of her taper fingers. Pauline helped herself generously.

"Does Miriam mean to keep on with that work all Winter?" she persisted, still turning to Sedley.

"I haven't really seen her lately, but I imagine she does."

"Well, I'll make it my business to get her out of that place before I leave Kingston." Pauline fell to on her luncheon again, with vehemence.

"Where will you put her, when you do get her out?" Cora asked coolly.

Pauline would have liked to answer "None of your business," but unfortunately Cora was her hostess.

"She would not want to go back to Dr. Danvers after that scene last year," Cora continued deliberately.

Pauline was agog for information. *They* had heard nothing of it. Cora *must* explain.

"Oh, I don't know just the ins and outs of it. There was something about a student who used to follow her home. I caught them in the porch one evening at dusk."

Sedley was watching his wife closely. He detected signs of malicious intent.

"Did he come from the East?" Pauline leaned forward eagerly, her fork suspended.

"Yes, so I believe." Nothing could have sounded so remote from personal bias as Cora's tone.

"Did you hear his name, Cora?"

"What was his name, Cora?" asked her husband, just as suddenly. "*I* never heard it."

His quick challenge sent tell-tale colour into her cheeks.

"Really I wasn't told," she answered to Pauline. "Oh, of course your aunt made little of it. Just as well for her own sake, don't you know. It was after that that Miriam took this position."

Sedley was still watching his wife, so closely, indeed, that she began to feel uncomfortable, and turned the conversation into channels beyond his depth. From a recital of misfits and misshapes in polite society as Cora knew it, her husband was fain to escape downtown.

"Don't make any engagement for to-night, Sedley," his wife called out. "There are two or three people coming in."

"All right!" Sedley answered cheerfully enough. But

a moment later he caught himself quoting beneath his breath,

> "Say not the struggle naught availeth
> The labour and the wounds are vain."

Resorting to poetry? This would never do! Suddenly his face brightened. Elizabeth was walking on the other side just in front of him.

"Why, Sedley, you look fagged out," she told him after he had joined her. "You had better come in and see father. He'll give you a tonic."

Sedley made light of her concern. He was thinking of dropping in at home, he told her, sometime that afternoon, and he would go with her now. "And whom do you think we have up at the house?"

Elizabeth could never guess. When she heard, "Why that's quite a tax, for Cora, isn't it?" she said hesitatingly. Had she uttered her thoughts she would have added, "when you are so hard pressed."

"She's a case, Pauline," Sedley said whimsically. "I never saw a greater contrast than between her and Miriam. They have positively nothing in common."

"Miriam is Uncle Roderick personified. Have you seen her lately, Sedley? She is unfolding like a flower, new petals every day and a further glimpse of her golden heart."

Her brother smiled at the description. "You have a good deal of the poet about you, Elizabeth," he said. "But I like that picture of Miriam."

Dr. Danvers was stepping into his buggy as they came up to the house. He hailed them cheerily. "What? Leaving husband and wife to pay a visit to the old home? How are Tom and Cora?"

Quite well, they told him. "But I think Sedley looks

sick, Father," Elizabeth interposed. "Couldn't you give him a tonic?"

"Oh, he's all right," their father pooh-poohed. "Stays up too late reading, I suppose. His old tricks." Sedley laughed and passed into the house to find his mother. Mrs. Danvers had just risen from the routine nap and her cheeks were like roses. She never failed to take this little rest after luncheon. "If I lose myself for even fifteen minutes," she would say, "I waken refreshed." She greeted her son with enthusiasm. "Sit down, dear, and tell mother how you are getting on."

"Just in the same old way," he told her, "Cora is having some friends in to-night, just one or two, for Pauline, and there's the reception to-morrow. I'm poking along at the office."

She watched him closely as he spoke. "I've wanted to say it for a long time, Sedley," she said finally. "And this may be as good a time as any. My boy, you are very unhappy in your home life. It is a heartbreak to your father and me."

The young man was silenced, but the dull flush on his cheeks bore witness to his agitation.

"I thought at first, I hoped, time might mend matters," his mother continued, after a moment's painful pause. "But the months are passing, it will soon be your second anniversary, and I fail to see any improvement in her. It is growing harder for us to be even civil to her. And as for you, her husband, I fear it will never be anything but a heavy cross to you. You cannot, you never will, have anything in common. I see nothing but shipwreck ahead."

Sedley drew himself up. "I don't think it should come to that," he said.

"How can it be helped?" his mother cried. "What will prevent it? If she had any saving virtues, any latent

powers that might be developed, I should not despair, but try as I may, and I *have* tried, I can find none. Oh, Sedley, how did you ever come to make such a choice?"

Sedley bit his lip. "This is rather a strange time to put that question, isn't it, Mother?"

"Perhaps it is. You never gave us a chance to put the question before. Perhaps it is. But it was wrung from me. If I could see the promise of nobility in her it would give me hope of better things. But she is utterly lacking."

Sedley's voice was firm and quiet. "No," he said, "you must not say that. Cora is not utterly lacking. She has powers of discernment that a good many of us might envy, and a strong will, which, if guided right, would accomplish wonders. And she is quick with her fingers, wonderfully clever."

"Oh, my poor boy," his mother wailed. "You have so pitifully little to defend her with."

"I don't think so," he said stoutly. "If I put beauty and youth on her side, too, it would weigh quite heavy, Mother."

It would fly into the air, were your virtues put in the other scale, his mother said to herself. Privately she would never allow Cora's beauty. She looked at him yearningly. Then, with quick maternal instinct, she saw how her words were hurting him.

"You said Pauline was here," she said, changing the subject quickly. "What a girl she is! Her tongue runs away with her. You must all come over for Sunday, Sedley. That will save Cora some preparation. I'll ask Miriam, too. Plucky little Miriam to make her own way this Summer. I admire her very much for it, and so does your father, although he pretends to be annoyed."

"She got along nicely here last Winter?" Sedley said

tentatively, having in mind Cora's fantastic scandal, the baseless fabric of which he had strongly suspected.

"Miriam? Certainly. No one could have been more pleasant in the home. What are you meaning, Sedley?"

Nothing at all, he assured her. And a moment later, smiling his old affectionate *adieu,* he was striding up the street. The beauty and freshness of the outside world was alluring. But—to his office he must go and peg away, if he were to make the most of the powers and opportunities given him. There were only a few years, at the most, for a man to work. It behooves him to get busy.

CHAPTER XIX: THRICE ARMED

"Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just."
—*King Henry VI,* PART II, ACT III, SC. 2.

JUNIOR English was just out. The students thronging the halls were talking, listening, tussling, skirmishing. The lull which the exit of the Professor of English occasioned was but momentary. A few casual glances at the hurrying figure, head bent, two tiny books under arm, and then the hailstorm of voices recommenced.

"The Concursus is to sit to-night!"—"Who cares if he is 'Science'?"—"General Cheek"—"Well, it's full time"—"Boulding's not the only one"—"Why, I tell you he was wearing the 'Q' at the parade"—'I hope they'll make the sentence heavy!"

Some few cries only were distinguishable from the general hubbub. The tones and gestures of the men showed how high feeling ran. Boulding of Science Hall was summoned to appear that night before the *Concursus Iniquitatis et Virtutis.*

This august body was a court of discipline conducted by the students with the approval of the Senate as a means of preserving order and decorum. Should any Freshman unduly ape his Seniors, should any Sophomore seem over attentive to the lady students, should any man use rough language on the campus, or prove insolent and generally fresh, lo! a summons to appear before the Concursus! Woe befall him who failed to comply! Varied were the charges preferred against the prisoners, but the most common was that which covered a multitude

of minor misdemeanors and was known as "General Cheek."

This charge was laid against Fyfe Boulding of Science Hall. Many were the instances and illustrations. He had escorted three girls to college. He had carried a cane to church. He had presented his private card as introduction to the Professor of Chemistry. He had paraded the college halls in a fashion offensively free. In the University parade he had carried a banner, "Science, Champions in Football." Lastly, he had worn, unwon, the famous College "Q." This was an honour permitted only to the great victors of the campus. That golden "Q" emblazoned on the sweaters of the students of Queen's was the hall-mark of athletic attainment. In prestige it scarcely ranked second to class medals. To presume to arrogate to oneself the dignity of this decoration, without having duly qualified, was an unpardonable offence among the whole student body. It was more than enough to warrant action. Proceedings were immediately instigated and Boulding was summoned forthwith.

"Hugh Stewart, there's a bundle of letters for you at the Office. The P.M. wishes you'd appear and claim your own. The 'S' box is crowded."

Hugh was hanging his college gown in the locker. The corridor was jammed. "Thanks, I'll go for them." He turned again to put his note-book on the shelf above his gown. "Hello! What's up at the bulletin board?" He joined the crowd that was standing three deep in the hall, pushing and craning their necks to see. "What's the news?" cried Hugh, slapping the nearest man.

"That you, Stewart? You should be interested. The Football Union has supported the protest against us, and it's up to us to beat them on Saturday and land the trophy."

"Poof! That's easy. We'd do that anyway," was

the confident response. "But that's mean of the Union all the same. We won't stand one-sided treatment. We'll get out."

"Yes, that's what I say," cried a little man, on the side. "Land the trophy and then clear out!" His big voice carried across the tumult. Though small of stature he was possessed of tremendous lung power. "Land the trophy and then clear out," he repeated, and a cheer went up from the crowd, as he was hoisted aloft and borne down the hall singing lustily,

"Beat our team you never, never will,
For you know you haven't got the skill.
We've been champions, we are champions still,
And will be till we die."

Two or three of the Senior students, coming out of the library, moved back until the populace surged past, whistling at the elevated position of the soloist. "What has Captain Goliath been doing?" asked one, staring up at the little man.

"They're getting excited about Saturday. Are you going to the match?"

"Well, rather! Do you think I'd sit quietly at home while our college put it all over them?"

"Did you hear what's on at the Concursus to-night?"

"I did. And it's high time. I saw him get his summons this morning. Boulding, yes. And when he had read it he smiled the most insolent smile, and strolled off through the halls, with his hat on the back of his head."

"He didn't get far with that!" another cried out. "It was knocked clear off across the halls over the bannister and down the stairway. The History lecture was just over and before they all got up the stairs, there wasn't much hat left."

A quick laugh ran around the circle. "Hush! That's his cousin," some one cried.

Keen glances scanned Miriam Campbell, passing down the hall.

"Who cares?" said one, recovering quickly as Miriam disappeared within the consulting library. "He's a duffer. Serves him right! There's something more on, though. Science men are going to make a rush on the Concursus and rescue their men. I had that straight from one of the Science Seniors. He says there'll be a big scrap."

"Tell your friend they'll be sorry they came, then," was the retort. "Arts men are twice as heavy. Remember the 'rush' last year on the campus? And our Freshmen are two to one against theirs in weight. There'll be a sorry-looking lot of Scientists tonight. By the way, there's the Registrar. Say we bombard his office and ask if there's any truth in the rumour that the fees are to be cut in half?"

The *Concursus Iniquitatis et Virtutis* sat at seven-thirty in the Mathematics room. The Arts men were gathered in large numbers. The judge sat in solemn state, with the jury ranged on his left. The prosecuting attorney, the lawyer for the defence, the witnesses all were there.

Enter the sheriff with the prisoner, Fyfe Boulding! Boulding was crimson with rage and his violent struggles were a source of great entertainment to the assembled court. At first he had thought it a joke, and a mark of distinction to be so summoned. That was how he had treated it with the Freshmen at his boarding-house. But his feelings changed when he actually came to the College and saw the students massed about the door. It was the first Court of the season and was of great interest, especially to the Freshies who had heard of its renown but had never witnessed its proceedings.

It was this vision of all his fellow-students, massed to see him tried, which completely unnerved Fyfe. His

coolness changed to a glow of indignation, and he tried to knock off the hands that held him. The scuffle delighted the onlookers, and there was a roar of laughter, mingled with shouts of "Constable!" "Constable!" But the valiant sheriff held him firm and dragged him into the dock.

The charge was laid—"General Cheek"—substantiated, as was necessary, by the citing of one particular instance, the wearing of the "Q," an honour unwon, and witnesses were produced on both sides. After eloquent speeches by the two lawyers, the judge's weighty charge to the jury (cheered to the echo by his fellow Seniors) the jury returned the verdict—"Guilty."

The judge arose. In passing sentence he wished to give some words in explanation. A roar of disapproval swept the court.

"This charge of 'General Cheek,' preferred against the prisoner, is becoming all too common!"

"Hear! Hear!" "That's right, your Honour." "There are others!"

"Stringent measures must be taken to prevent its recurrence!"

Tremendous pedal and vocal applause greeted this weighty ruling.

"The punishment best befitting a crime of that order is one which tends to lower the self-esteem of the delinquent, and hold him up to public shame!"

Deafening shouts! Cries of "Good stuff!" Cat calls! "Order in the Court!"

"I proceed to pass sentence on the prisoner." In a big voice and amid an awful silence, he uttered these words—"I sentence you, Fyfe Boulding, undergraduate, and student in Science Hall, to be publicly spanked, by means of a shingle, on——"

But the sentence was arrested by a mighty shout, and

in crashed the door of the court room! Then the Science slogan rent the air:

"Hail! Hail! the gang's all here!
Steam drills and concentrators,
Gold and iron ore,
Science Hall forever! Queen's forever more!"

It was the call to arms. Arts *vs.* Science had long been a war-cry and it needed but an occasion such as this to provoke a deadly warfare. In an instant the Arts men had closed about their prisoner, fighting off the attempts at rescue.

"Arts huzza! Arts huzza!
Floreat Academia, Arts! Arts! Arts!"

They were almost equal in numbers, but the Arts had the advantage in weight. Back and forth the contest waged, the Science men struggling towards the platform where Boulding was guarded, the Arts men pushing them towards the door. Although the "scrim" was general, there were many private skirmishes between Science and Arts men who embraced this opportunity of paying off old scores in this satisfactory manner.

But—Science was losing ground. The Arts men were bringing their heavy weights to the fore. Two huge Highlanders from Lanark acted as battering-rams. Behind these the Arts men worked.

The Scientists were not to be dislodged without an heroic struggle. Realising that their plan to rescue Boulding had fallen through, and spying the judge in front of the fighting line, they made a set for him. The Arts men closing in, warding off, elbowing, buffeting and pushing. The judge was adamant. He stood his ground, rolling out orders and sounding the college yell as from cavernous depths of chest.

Hugh Stewart, in the thick of the fight, had edged

up nearer to the judge. His muscular powers made him a doughty foeman. "Come on!" "Come on!" he was yelling, completely carried away by this titanic engagement. He saw a man on the other side of the judge fighting furiously against an avalanche of the invaders. Then, in some miraculous manner, one of the invaders had slipped into his place and was tussling with the judge at close range. Hugh saw the move and knew that at any moment they would be surrounded. He threw back his head. "Once more unto the breach, ye Arts men, yet once more!" he shouted, in his stentorian voice. The cry rallied the forces. Efforts were redoubled. Side by side with the Lanark stalwarts Hugh fought, pushing, pummelling, pounding. Arts men followed up, Science gave way. They were pushed through the door down the hall, and out to the campus, where the whole student body went tumbling across the green.

Hugh walked home with a crowd of his year men. Their hearts were light over the victory and particularly over some little thrashings administered on the side. In amiable chorus they warbled,

"The Campus is the place to kick
The football and to shout;
The Campus is the place to turn
Umbrellas inside out.
The Campus is a lovely spot
To ambulate about."

"Well, Judge, they nearly carried you captive to Science Hall."

"Not so easy as you think."

"Why you were completely cornered. It was just before Stewart, here, broke through with that yell."

"Our football Goliath was beside me till he got knocked away by a bunch of Christian Scientists."

"Knocked away!" Disgust was in Hugh's voice.

"Why, he let the man slip into his place. He almost lost our Faculty to Science—I say, I pretty nearly forgot all about it!"

"What's up?"

"Oh, I have an invitation that I'd like to skip. But—I can't. I'll say good night, fellows."

"Good night, Stewart! Good night, Hugh! Hope your bones won't ache too badly."

Hugh cut a caper to prove himself fit, and strode off through the park. A shout from behind recalled his attention—"You're going the wrong way!"

He laughed and waved his hand, still striding on. It was Sedley Danvers' house he was making for, whatever the boys thought was his right destination. "Just an informal evening," Mrs. Sedley had assured him. "My husband's cousin from Ottawa, Miss Pauline Campbell, is visiting me."

It is doubtful whether Hugh would have accepted without the bait held out in the name Campbell. Cora's invitation was tossed so lightly in his direction that he felt every inclination to ignore it. Had he heard all the altercation anent that visit he would have been prejudiced against the functions in its honour.

Cora's welcome, however, had all of effusion and nothing of reproach for tardiness, when at length he arrived at her home. She, herself, admitted him, and gaily swept her six-foot Highlander into the minute reception-room.

"Of course you know we're cousins," Sedley exclaimed, shaking hands heartily. "We found that out on a midnight ramble. Every one in Cape Breton is, if you go far enough back. If you don't watch you will find yourself related to Miriam."

"I'll take good care!" Hugh retorted, so unexpectedly that the other man laughed out.

So Miriam was the connecting link, Pauline deduced. She forthwith set herself to annex Hugh's interest. Rather more difficult it was than she had thought. Hugh answered her leading questions literally. No tantalising admissions or coy rejoinders could trap him into compliments. He looked straight at the girl with the downright sincerity characteristic of his clan, and never dropped into her personal undertone. And all the time his quick glances towards any movement near the door suggested that he was missing some one else. Pauline was thoroughly disgusted and mentally turned him over to Miriam, obtuseness and all.

Not so Cora. She had her own schemes laid, which Hugh must further. Her plan of attack was subtler than Pauline's. She had been playing from some of the latest operas before his appearance. Now her taper fingers glided into the sweet, inviting notes of "Annie Laurie." Hugh turned towards her. She changed the air again. "Ye Banks and Braes," the piano wailed out. Hugh walked towards the instrument. From that she passed to "Over the Sea to Skye," and when the tones of "Wi' a Hundred Pipers an' a' an' a' " went marching merrily out of those keys, Hugh had thrown back his head and was shouting, with the best of them,

"We'll up and gie them a blaw, a blaw."

After that it was easy to fall into conversation, and while her fingers picked out softly the tender Scottish strains, Cora succeeded in getting in her most spiteful thrusts at Miriam Campbell. Hugh was a friend of hers? Yes? Well, they all wanted to be, too. But really Miriam was making it hard for them these days to be even polite to her. Why? Cora showed a painful hesitation and she struck some minor chords as though her heart cried out against anything unkind or unlovely in the world.

Then, facing Hugh's steady eyes with her own hawk-like gaze, Cora reluctantly referred to some unfortunate references to Miriam that had been made that very day, in regard to, well, to be candid, in regard to her rather free ways with men, meeting them out in the evenings unknown to her aunt and uncle who were so very good to her, taking her in as one of their own, in fact.

Her injured concern for Dr. and Mrs. Danvers had its effect on Hugh's high sensitiveness, and when Cora, seeing her shafts had lodged, struck out into the full-voiced harmony of the "Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond," Hugh's heart swelled with righteous indignation against anything clandestine or unworthy, especially when practised by so respectfully-connected a girl as Miriam Campbell.

"Well, Stewart, how is college work going?" It was Sedley's chance now, for Cora was looking after supper.

"Oh, we're getting into the swing of it again. It's dull around the halls till the Divinities get back. They keep the songs and yells going. It's great weather for field sports, though. I'm out at football every afternoon. My course is pretty heavy this year; I'm taking honour work in Polecon and I need a good send-off."

"You haven't been down East lately, to Nova Scotia."

"Well, no, I've been West mostly," Hugh returned. "I like the stir and the freshness of the people out there."

"Do you? They wouldn't have much time for studying or reading, would they?"

"Well, I don't know. They seem well-read, however it happens. They must have got through with it young. I don't seem to get to read much, myself. I never did. I wish I had had books when I was a boy. We were just hungry for books."

"What a pity! What kind of books do you like best? Fiction?"

"No, I'm not very much for stories. Once in a while a good detective story or adventure—no, I like biography. It's a good mixture of everything, don't you think? Fiction and history and geography and philosophy—in short, it's *life.*"

"Oh, it's life!" Sedley agreed.

"What is 'the life'?" Pauline picked up the last words as she stepped nearer the charmed circle.

Sedley laughed out. The next he rose smiling. Who in the doorway framed but Miriam! On seeing the others she stepped back, but Sedley drew her in. "Come to see sister?" he asked. "Here she is!"

Hugh, who had risen, was a witness to the careless greeting between the girls. And then his turn came.

"Thank you for your good little letter," he said, holding out his hand.

"Did the cooper enjoy it?" Miriam was smiling up at him.

"Immensely. Especially your reference to 'barrels of fun.'"

"Did he put this letter under his clock, do you know?"

"No, he's after putting this one under his watch."

Sedley whistled softly, looking from one to the other.

"Oh, I heard about the awful fight you had to-night," Miriam hurried on to say. "They said Hugh Stewart fought like a wild Indian."

"A wild Highlander," Sedley suggested. "Just a reversal to type."

"Oh, a little tussle with Science. We hustled them out for some fresh air. They were interrupting the Concursus."

"Interrupting! Yes, I should say so! Breaking in doors and making things generally uproarious. You

men will have to put your hands in your pockets for all that damage. What was it all about, the Concursus, I mean?"

"Oh, a fellow who got too everlastingly fresh and would have been spanked, only for the interruption—Boulding. Oh, by the way, I forgot." He stopped, looking at Miriam.

Her face was a picture of conflicting sentiments. Sedley watched her, amusement in his eyes. "Is—that—who it was?" She looked up, smiling swiftly at the two men and flushing thereafter. "I wish those Science students would keep to their own halls," she said, "and let justice take its course. They're always spoiling things."

Hugh's laugh held something of triumph as well as pleasure. "Don't you worry. He'll get what's coming to him, sooner or later."

CHAPTER XX: MIND'S INWARD SERVICE

> "Nature, crescent, does not grow alone
> In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
> The inward service of the mind and soul
> Grows wide withal."
>
> —*Hamlet,* Act I, Sc. 3.

The station was jammed with students. They packed the little waiting-room, the sidewalk, the platform. They overflowed among the freight sheds, across the rails, and on to the empty trucks stalled along the tracks. The staircase leading from the waiting-room was a solid mass of girls, who lent gay colour to the scene. And colour a-plenty floated in the Autumn air from the vivid college pennants, ribbon bands, and streamers of the old scholastic tricolour, blue, red and yellow.

They were waiting for Geordie. His train was on schedule time. No plaint forthcoming there. And if they had been packed here in seething, swaying crowds for half an hour or more, whose fault but their own? But they wanted to get Geordie. They must see if that ocean voyage had brought the needed glow of health. They must take him on the last lap of his journey. They must show him that Queen's was still on the old Ontario strand.

A warning shriek and whistle! A long-drawn, answering, ear-splitting duplicate from the assembled hordes! In from the little junction came trundling, sooty and important, the train that bore its precious passenger to the waiting crowds.

Train officials, city dignitaries, members of the Senate, professors, tutors—Geordie! A yell rent the air.

And to their Principal's answering wave and smile and bow a thundering chorus of cheers re-echoed. Then they chanted out their College yell, *staccato.* Pennants and ribbons waved, shouts of welcome were redoubled and the long metre doxology thundered the tidings,

"Queen's College is our jolly home;
We love it still where'er we roam.
The very songs we used to sing
In memory's echoes long shall ring."

"To the University! To the University!" The cry ran from group to group. Away with the horses! Are there not willing steeds enough to draw Geordie to his home? Cheering and singing, the crowds surged up the little hill. The city was taken by storm. It was, indeed, a willing captive. Queen's was Principal Grant's College. Kingston was Principal Grant's city. All Canada knew that. And all Kingston knew that the Principal was coming home that day. There was not an idler on the street corner, a housewife along the festive route, an envious, derisive school-boy, running on the outskirts of the crowd, a nurse with a group of little children, who did not understand the significance of that swaying, hilarious mass of young men, charging along the sunlit streets, westward, ever westward!

"To the University!" The girls have branched off through the park. "Beat the men! Beat the men!" they call, running and laughing and panting. Are these the staid college girls, their decorum changed to recklessness, themselves a part of the general mêlée? Up Deacon Street and through the campus. A roar from far down the slopes! The men are at the lower campus gate. In the door! Up, up, up the stairs! To the gallery! To the gallery!

Miriam Campbell in the forefront of the pushing, laughing, jaded jam of girls, makes a superhuman effort

to scale those last few steps. A mighty shout from below! The men come charging up the stairs behind them. The gallery, man's ancient stronghold, is endangered!

In at the gallery door burst the girls, the men at their very heels. "To the front seats!"—There are no aisles. Gathering her last bit of strength, Miriam pressed by the throngs behind, tumbled and scrambled in, over and down, over and down, over and—a shriek. She was over the edge, over that sheer drop of— No, she was caught! On the very brink. A hand shot out and caught her, caught and held her firm, and drew her, shaking and terrified and spent, down to the seat beside him.

"Oh, Hugh!" she said, in sobbing whisper, shrinking against him in her terror, "I was nearly killed!"

Hugh's arms ached, not with drawing the cab, but with longing to clasp her tight—*tight!*

"A-hem!" came a voice from the rear. "I say, Stewart, are you going to apply for the Humane Society medal?" And then in louder tones, from a farther corner, "Oh, Hugh, you'll have to marry her. You can't get out of it now!—Wow!"

Miriam's cheeks held two glowing centres. If by any means possible she could have crawled out of that miserably public place! But she was wedged in by the whole mass of men and girls she had out-run. Someway she must live through it. The next moment she forgot herself in the burst of sound which deafened her ears—

"Oil thigh na Bannrighinn gu bragh.
Cha gheill! Cha gheill! Cha gheill!"
("Queen's forever! Never yield! Never yield! Never yield!")

The sunlight was fading in the western sky as Miriam trailed her homeward way down the winding paths. She was spending the Winter at Elizabeth's new home in town —a wandering Jew indeed. She walked to the edge of

the park. Suddenly she remembered her note-books, left behind in the excitement of the afternoon in her locker. Hurriedly she retraced her steps through the park and on into the campus. It was dark in the old Arts building, but she could have walked blindfold through it. She found her locker. Yes, there they were, piled up on the shelf. The janitor coming down the hall, jingling his bunch of keys, stopped to enquire in his kindly way if she were going to spend the night there. "Such late meetings as these students have," he murmured, shaking his grey head seriously. "There's the glee club just gone."

"I suppose the girls are the worst," Miriam said, to draw him out.

No, indeed, the girls were the best of them, the old janitor affirmed. He decidedly favoured co-education. He had watched and noted how these same young men would be cutting up capers when all of a sudden a sweet young maiden would glide along the halls and by her very presence check the hilarity of those youths. And, being convinced of the benefit to the University of the lady students, he did his best to make their lot a happy one. The very way in which he said "Yes it's a fearful day," seemed to clear things up a little when the prospects were so doleful some dark Winter morning.

"Well, I must hurry home," she told him, "or you'll be locking me in." Running down the dim, wide staircase she saw below in the hall, a student, making his way out in front of her. Miriam strained her eyes to look. Yes, it certainly was Hugh Stewart, Hugh, who had saved her! He loomed so large in the shadows, larger than she had even thought him. Why, he was a man now, nothing of the youth left. Those six months in the West had worked a wonderful change.

She hurried just a little. It would be too bad if

he got out first and made away with those long strides of his before he knew she was behind. But Miriam was just too late. She let the door bang after her, hoping that the noise might attract his attention. Hugh turned at the sound, recognised her, hesitated for a moment, lifted his hat and then plunged ahead down the steep little path through the campus.

She was thoroughly disappointed. More than that—hurt. He had done it deliberately. Not to wait a moment to walk along with her! It was not gallant of him, even if they had not been good friends. But coming after that agitating episode of the afternoon, it was heartless!

She walked along steadily, at a good safe distance behind him, her heart surcharged with a hot wave of indignation. And when he turned up Barrie Street, she kept right on through the park, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Had she known Hugh's thoughts her indignation would have heightened.

What was Miss Campbell doing in the college at that late hour? Hugh was wondering. She had been talking to some man, he knew, for he had heard their voices from the upper story. He had not seen the grey-haired janitor with his bunch of keys, standing erect by the head of the staircase, chatting away in his communicative fashion, and keeping Miriam longer than she cared to stay.

In any case Hugh thought it might be just as well, in view of the circumstances, not to advance on his intimacy with the girl. The gibes of the students were not forgotten. The Scotch reserve was uppermost now. So he kept on his circumspect way until he reached his boarding-house. A group of the fellows were lined up on the stairs, waiting until the tea-bell rang, and giving an impromptu concert meantime. They had all sorts of musical instruments, from a mandolin to a Jew's harp,

and one of them, standing at the bottom with a toothpick for a baton, was delivering this impromptu ballad with a thundering accompaniment by the band.

Oh, I hope there's something hot for tea,
Something piping, steaming h-o-t!
Stewed-up prunes or rice won't do,
We prefer an oyster stew,
If there's none we'll all skidoo,
O-U-T!

We are tired, so tired, of mush and hash,
We'll be doing something wild and rash.
If those things again are seen,
There'll be wigs upon the green.
We can't study and between
Eat trash!

Hugh tried to scale the stairs by means of the bannisters. But the concert broke up suddenly and he was seized and carried bodily to his room by five or six men, who, despite the struggles of this, the athletic champion of the year, proceeded to tie him to his own bedpost.

Hugh swung round his big arm and sent one man sprawling. Then he seized his ink-bottle and holding it up, threateningly, vowed to spoil the collar of the first one who approached. The clang of the tea-bell persuaded them that discretion was the better part of valour and they all decamped in a body, each grabbing some article as a memento of the visit, a slipper, a hairbrush, a necktie and a medal, all of which booty they laid at the feet of their long-suffering landlady, begging her to deduct an eighth of a week's board and accept payment in kind.

This united attack on Hugh for which very purpose they had been lined up on the stairs, was intended to act as an offset to his recent triumph in the debating contest, his prospects for the "Polecon" medal, and to prevent his double victory on campus and platform from

completely turning his brain. The frenzy of the afternoon was slow in subsiding.

Hugh did not feel very comfortable that evening. He had told himself that it was the part of wisdom to forego the companionship of a girl who could act as Miriam had evidently done, although there lingered a trace of reluctance to cut off a friend so suddenly, especially one whom he had saved that very afternoon. Anyway it would not have stained his reputation to have walked a few blocks with her. Cora had got in better work than she knew. Poor, unquestioning Hugh, unaccustomed to the wiles of venomous women, had accepted too readily those concoctions of hers regarding Miriam's laxity, and his righteous judgment had been directed against the wrong person.

The Winter passed with the usual round of lectures and study, with the rink claiming a good share of the leisure hours and the hockey matches drawing their crowds of admiring spectators. Glee club concerts, dramatic performances, the University sermons, the German play, the Minerva society of which Miriam had been elected president, the year "At Homes," the Conversazione, the missionary societies, threatre night, Alma Mater society, Mock Trial, Alumni Association, each claimed the interest for a brief period and passed out of sight for the year, while the steady march of lectures went relentlessly on.

Miriam and Hugh saw very little of each other, apart from an occasional encounter in the halls. Hugh's reserve was wearing away with the passing of the months and he showed a desire to renew their old comradeship, finding nothing in Miriam's deportment to substantiate Cora's charges, and feeling privately ashamed of his hasty judgment. But he found it more difficult than he had thought to repair a broken friendship. Miriam was

keeping her own sweet distance, and quietly ignored his overtures.

This of course made him all the more determined. Chances of meeting socially were becoming rarer as the term advanced, but—there was the Senior "At Home." Certainly she would be there! So away with "Bosanquet" and off for Miriam! Hugh, in evening attire, was no unworthy object of a girl's regard, and he had taken very special care to make himself presentable. With the whitest of shirts and the blackest of suits, with shining shoes and a curly head much trimmer than it had been three years previous, he made quite a figure in the halls as he was hailed by one and another.

"Hullo, Hugh! Thought you'd be digging in to-night. Couldn't resist, eh? That's right."

"There's Stewart! You're not a Senior, Stewart. You are? Well, I knew you had *some interest* in the graduating class!"

"Say, Mr. Stewart, come over and be introduced to this bunch of girls. I'm on the reception committee, and by all the powers, I'll not be on it again. I can't get them to budge from that corner. I told them I'd bring a real lion—the champion athlete—oh, I say——"

For Hugh, having suddenly seen his duty in another direction, was off to do it. He remembered on an instant, that he had not been properly "received"—remembered it just as he saw that "she herself" was in the waiting line, to have her hand shaken, as punishment for being the Vice-President of her year.

Hugh gave a squeeze that sent her ring into the next finger. "I didn't know you would be here," he said, impulsively. Really, these warm, brightly-lighted halls, with the voice of music and the perfume of flowers and fragrant whiffs of coffee, had the boarding-house all beaten, actually they had. He had thought last night that

there was nothing finer than settling down at a table full of books in front of a shaded lamp, with his feet on the register. But now with Miriam, a vision of pink loveliness, before him, and the feeling of her slim, cool fingers inside his big hand, his opinions took a somersault.

As for Miriam, she remembered her grievances. Hugh Stewart could not play with her, being nice or nasty as he chose.

"Will you keep the last number for me?" he was actually asking.

"I have it filled, Mr. Stewart." The mischief she had!

"Which ones can you give me, then?" How audacious he was, and how handsome!

"I can't give you any. No, I mean I actually can't. Well, they're all taken. All right then, you may see for yourself. Why, you don't need to spell out every name. Oh, of course I'm awfully sorry, but some were promised before and——"

Miriam! Miriam! How Pauline would stare, how Sedley would shout to hear you!

Hugh could not laugh. He was vexed. He did not believe the names were genuine. But he gathered up the scattered pieces of his pride for one more try.

"I should like to walk home with you at the close of the evening." He said it with all the gravity and decorum of a Professor of Rhetoric. So afraid was he of a refusal that he had lapsed into his old diffidence.

"I have promised already, Mr. Stewart." She was as glad to tell it as he was annoyed to hear it. Yet he had known. Her eyes had told it before her words.

"Well then, good-evening," he said, and to Miriam's amazement had turned and gone, not into Convocation Hall, but down to the dressing-room again. Going home because he was cross! Not spunky enough to go ahead

and have a good time anyway! And she laughed with glee even while she said to herself, "Poor, dear Hugh!"

Now, if he could have heard that!

And yet, so contrary is man, that the next day being Saturday and "band at the rink," he dropped his work again and set off. What a glorious afternoon it was—not many more this Winter. Every one was skating. Ilka lassie had her laddie, and the band was playing "Comin' thro' the rye." Yet try as he might he couldn't get Miriam. She was either skating or going into the dressing-room, every single time. And the first thing he knew the band was playing them off—early, too, because of the big hockey match at night. And, "May I walk home with you, Miss Campbell?" He was quite prepared to say it, when she actually walked past him with Fyfe Boulding. A pest on these cousins! And hardly looked in his direction!

Well, what was the use of bothering about girls, uncertain creatures that they were! Why should he try to meet her? Hugh gave up the attempt at last, with secret chagrin at the turn affairs had taken, and plunged into his studies. The Winter's work was in full swing now. The halls hummed with the voices of gowned figures going their several ways to class-rooms, and the full-throated tones of the professors expounding, explaining, examining, while the click of the typewriters in the registrar's office, an occasional explosion from the physics classroom or the far-off tinkle of the piano in the girls' Minerva room relieved the oppression of the atmosphere. There were hours in the still library among those rows of silent books, crammed full of knowledge. Think of the brains of the men who had written, now dust and silence! No, not silence. They had left their word of life fairly set down in black and white, a wonderful achievement.

There were hours, in the musty air of the old museum, where, amid the stillness of extinct species, the oppressive companionship of skeletons and fossils, one struggled to see and to see over some abstruse doctrine of Immanuel Kant or John Stuart Mill. An intellectual struggle this, which gripped the very nerve of you, and wrenched the fibres of your brain in that wild clutch after the intangible. Hours when the sunshine outside seemed sickly and unreal, when the very chair on which you sat disappeared from beneath you and left you faced with but the reality of the invisible, and your whole being one throbbing desire to comprehend.

There were hours in the lecture-room when, pen in hand, and note-book open, head bent and mind alive, one wrote as though his very fate depended on it. And so it did to some extent. For those wakening thoughts, those illuminating explanations, which came in flowing periods from the professor's lips contained the very elements of salvation for a certain day in April.

So the Winter passed, Spring drew on warm and luring, and when the buds began to swell on the maple-trees in the campus, and the lake, blue and white flecked, danced in the sunshine, there came one day the call—Step out into the world of men. The splendid years of your college course are over.

In the little group on which the gates of University life closed that Spring day and before which opened the doors of the great world, Miriam Campbell passed out to take her place in the ranks of the world's workers.

CHAPTER XXI: FULL OF BRIARS

""O, how full of briars is this working-day world!"
—*As You Like It,* Act I, Sc. 3.

A spotless April afternoon, just on the verge of May; sweet bird-notes, throbbing with lovesick, Springtime madness; fresh breeze hot with sun; the streets of the old Limestone City alive with a gay throng making their way to the Convocation exercises of Queen's University.

The hall is filling rapidly. Here are the representatives of Kingston's best families arrayed in festive attire, for this is the social event of the Spring and Kingston is proud of her University. Here, too, are visitors from sister cities, from rural neighbourhoods, from growing towns. They have come from far, to witness the laureation of those in whom they take a special interest, for whose sake, probably, they have made untold sacrifices, sacrifices already forgotten in the joy of success. The gallery is filled with a crowd of undergraduates, stored up with wit and wisdom to shower on the heads of their brothers in the limelight. The blue, red and yellow streamers float over the railing, and a huge placard portraying a man with a bulged-out head and attenuated body, bears the inscription, "I'll have a sheepskin too."

Songs are in order now. Out swells the familiar strain,

"We wear the yellow flower
That marks the earnest life,
Enriched with learning's dower,
Trained in athletic strife.
In fact, we fairly make things hum,
We boys of the Chrysanthemum."

Then the college yell rends the air.

Suddenly there was spied the advance guard of the professorial procession. The white-haired Chancellor, walking side by side with the chaplain of the day, moved slowly up the middle aisle towards the platform. A simultaneous burst of applause broke from the gods, for not a student there but knew and revered that stately personage. But the next moment this was drowned in a mighty cheer which shook the rafters and echoed far out across the city, for a tall figure was walking alone behind them, pale from his long illness, worn with the strain of his onerous duties, but with the same calm, cheerful dignity that won allegiance, love and loyalty from every student heart. Then they sang his song, sang it as though they loved to sing it, every word,

"Rule, rule, Geordie,
Geordie rules the boys.
Oh, what a happy man is Geordie!"

A quick smile broke over his face. The Principal loved that tribute.

Then the students turned to lesser matters. They greeted the professor of Old Testament Literature with the cheering assertion that there was just "one more river to cross." They sang a plaintive wail in behalf of another who had "no hair on the top of his head." They chanted the dirge of the man who demanded drastic amputation—"Saw my leg off, *Short.*" They cheered "Pheesics" and insisted on reminding the Registrar of his academic degree, and many were the personal references which only the initiated could appreciate. A handful of rice was sprinkled on the heads of a freshly-engaged couple just below the gallery, and when the aged gentleman next to them resented a grain or so on his own bald pate and put up his umbrella, there ensued a regular fusillade. An elderly spinster, who had loosened

her bonnet strings, found a sudden coolness above and beheld her cherished headgear drawn up and up, galleryward on the end of a fish-hook. In response to her horrified stare it was carefully lowered to its landing-place, a trifle askew, but with the added ornament of line and fish-hook.

Finally, the students calm themselves for the opening ceremonies, and Convocation proceeds in its formal, scholastic manner. When the laureating ceremonial is reached there is a stir among the rows of students seated near the front. The medallists come first, and Hugh Stewart is favoured with a regular ovation as he strides to the front to receive the medal in Political Economy. Hugh has no fond relatives in the audience. His people at home are puzzled to know what this strange "Polecon" means—is it some bird of the wilderness, or does it deal with the subject of marriage? Polecon, pelican, polygamy. Besides, the trip is too long and costly. But one girl in gown and mortar-board, seated among the students, watches him with an interest born of acquaintance with Trout Brook and his home among the mountains of Cape Breton, where the little stream with willows bending over flows below his barn, and the miniature windmill is at work churning butter.

But when the name of Isabel Margaret Miriam Campbell is called and Miriam finds herself, as in a dream, mounting the platform steps and kneeling while the Chancellor, holding a college cap above her head, pronounces those ominous words, which invoke undying allegiance to this Alma Mater, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts slips on her B.A. hood, many eyes are strained to see, and a quick burst of applause greets the young girl as she descends. Her uncle and aunt are well to the front, Professor Tom is on the platform, Sedley and Cora are just across from her, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Ruther-

ford are beaming from the side and friends of her friends are all interested in her laureation. But as she sinks back, hooded and triumphant in her seat, Miriam's eyes seek out from among the crowd one dear face and she feasts upon that look of gratified happiness imprinted upon it. Pale, older it is, but still the same kind father's face and she knows what this hour, the culmination of long years of expectation and concern, means to him.

And presently it is all over. As a dream, when one awakens, all the pomp and glory of the Convocation day have passed, and the students are dispersing to their various destinations and old Kingston again sinks into her enchanted sleep.

The first morning that Miriam wakened in her own home she tried to recall what awful calamity had happened. A sense of depression and loss brooded over her. What could it mean? Then she remembered. There was *no more college*. The realisation came like a dull blow. For a moment life seemed an utter blank.

Her misery was heightened by the sound of Pauline's voice at the door. "Hurry and get up, Miriam. We've got to get the fire started." Her sister's voice sounded so hopelessly unsympathetic, that Miriam's heart failed her completely. How infinitely happier the girl who has never tasted the joys of college life!

"This is the working-day world I used to speak of so easily," she whispered to herself, dressing swiftly. "Now it's here. And all my talk about working ideals is in order, I suppose. But how am I ever going to endure it, if Pauline keeps on making hits at my studies!"

But her sister was more merciful than she expected. Perhaps Miriam's reticence disarmed her, perhaps she proposed giving the girl time to recover. For even the uninitiated see how great is the change from the high realms of thought, visions and ideals, to the everyday

home life among those who have not shared the experience. Miriam felt lost without college. She moved about the house the first few days in bewilderment. As yet she could not realise that these were not holidays, but that the months would stretch into years and she must find her interests outside the University walls.

What made it harder, too, was the fact of their limited means. When she began college she had left a home of comfort and ease. Now she found things pinched and scarce. She had to take a good share of actual hard work, for the Campbells had very little to go on, and could not afford extra help.

"You act as though you were in a dream all the time, Miriam," Pauline told her one evening, when they were sitting out on the little front step. "You ought to get rid of all that excited, gaunt look and take some interest in the family's concerns."

"Don't I do my share?" Miriam asked bluntly. She was thoroughly tired with a long day's routine and in no mood to be attacked.

"Oh, yes, you work all right. Mother and I are quite surprised at the amount you can do when you set your hand to it, and don't pose as the student. But for pity's sake, Miriam, look as though you took some interest in things! You go around the house as grumpy as though you had lost your best friend. I believe you'd rather be with those college girls than with your own sister."

Miriam said nothing in rebuttal. Just at the present moment Pauline might have truth on her side. The girl was miserably lonely for some of her old associates.

"Besides, Miriam," the older girl continued, in what she meant to be a tender tone, "you don't show the spirit of a Christian. After all father and mother have done for you to give you these free years in Kingston, and then when they want you home to do some little work,

you sulk." She paused a moment to fix her quotation and then delivered it, virtuously. "Not slothful in business, *fervent in spirit,* serving the Lord!"

If Miriam had not been so tired she would have laughed at Pauline's unction. But she really felt too tragic to look for humour. Her sister talked as though keeping house were work, and those months of stiff study "free years." Miriam could not stand that.

"You seem to think studying wasn't work at all," she said, wrathfully, and ignoring the quotation. "If you had been there yourself you would know better."

"So I was," her sister said, complacently. "I visited Elizabeth when she was going to college. Possibly you would not remember. You were only a skinny schoolgirl with your hair in a pig-tail. Anyway I went to several lectures, and they did not strike me as so wonderfully 'stiff' as you call it. Uncle Owen wanted me to stay on and take the course. And so I might have, only that my eyes gave out." She blinked corroboratively.

Miriam was thoroughly exasperated. She was privately persuaded that even with two pairs of eyes Pauline could never have "taken the course" as easily as she referred to it. And it was certainly trying to rank one's achievement in graduation with something any one might accomplish. She was spared replying by the approach of two girls, one a neighbour, and the other a 'Varsity graduate who was visiting her. They slipped down on the lower steps, refusing Pauline's offer of cushions.

"We came over to call on your college sister," was the smiling explanation. "Just to get a whiff of University air."

"Yes, I'm stifled," the other girl continued. "You get so tired of this ordinary life on the plains, you need an occasional breath from the heights."

"You'll get more than a breath here," Pauline laughed. "There's a breeze all the time. What Miriam would call a 'stiff' breeze, I suppose." She wiggled further into her corner after that retort. But she was in no mind to have the evening pass with Miriam's achievements in the fore.

"Say, girls," she launched out, spreading her skirts and exhibiting one patent toe, "who's the new teller over there in the bank, with a little black moustache? He's awfully cute!"

The neighbour girl knew and fell into the conversation readily. The other turned to Miriam. "Aren't you sorry it's all over?" she said. "I think the first few months out of college are dreadful. What are you going to do?"

Miriam shook her head. If she had any plans she could not divulge them here with Pauline's ears open to catch what she said.

"Come on for a turn up the street. We won't go far," she assured the others, lest they should decide to come too.

"You can't settle down without some regular work, I'll tell you that, Miriam," she began as soon as they were out of earshot. "Unless you're actually needed to help in the house, I'd branch out into something. Put your University course into use. You'll wither on the stalk if you don't. It's all nonsense to talk about college girls being no good at home, afterwards, or perhaps it's all sense. They aren't any good for some of the trivialities. They are quite disqualified. You'll find you can't slip into your old niche at home. It would be a wasted four years if you could. Remember I don't say you can't find *a* place at home. But you can't find your old place. There must be readjustments. And to spend your spare time as Pauline does in fixing up her clothes for parties and going to them seems to me the emptiest sort of existence."

Miriam heaved a deep sigh. This sort of talk might be revolutionary but it was soothing. "I wonder what I could do," she began. "You're in the civil service. I don't know whether I'd have a chance."

"Yes, but that might not suit you." The other girl spoke doubtfully. Then, "Why don't you take a year at the Normal and teach?" she suggested.

"I thought of that but I can't bear to ask father for another year's study."

"But if it were to make you practically independent he would not mind."

They strolled back and forth talking in an intimate way which those of common experience can enjoy. Miriam went to sleep that night with further vistas of achievement opening out before her.

What plans and prospects faced those hundreds of students, whom the closing of the term or the conclusion of their course sent out from the old Limestone City! Over the length and breadth of the Dominion they scattered. The long snake-like C. P. R. that went thundering along the wild north shore of Lake Superior carried a score or more students bound for the great Northwest. Hugh Stewart pillowing his head on satchel and overcoat, was wakened from an uncomfortable doze by a sudden jolt of the train, and the voices of two students opposite, talking of their destination.

"I've got a school in Saskatchewan," a young Arts graduate was saying. "It's just east of Yorkton. They pay sixty a month."

"Subtract your board from that," the other man returned.

"No, I'm going to bach. There's a shack that will hold me, I imagine."

"Can you cook?"

"Sure thing. The three 'p's' will put me through—

porridge and potatoes and pancakes. You come along and call some day when you're doing parochial visiting, and I'll cook supper. It will be something uncommon."

"I believe you," his friend answered. "About that visiting you speak of, I'll have to invest in a pony, I suppose. But I'm not going to Saskatchewan, you know. I have a mission field in Alberta, near Mundare."

"What is Stewart bringing his Economics medal out here for?" the other man asked, looking over to where Hugh lay cramped in a futile attempt at rest. "He didn't graduate, did he? What's he up to?"

"I don't know just where he's bound for. Come on over and have a chat. He's not asleep."

Hugh turned over lazily, as they poked him, and settled his big shoulders against the cushions of the seat. "Aren't you fellows going to have a snooze?" he asked drowsily.

"It's too rough," one man answered. "Those jolts would spoil my best dreams. I'll be glad when we strike the prairie. Another tunnel! Well, what smoke! This is the worst of the trip, I think."

"Where are you going, Stewart?"

"Out to Regina. I'm in a law office there. It used to be my uncle's before he was elevated to the Bench. I'll finish my second six months."

"Aren't you going to Osgoode?"

Hugh shook his head. "Osgoode's all right for Ontario, but it's better for the West if you get into a good law office and learn the practical workings."

"Lucky man you are. I suppose you'll settle West."

"I rather think I will," said Hugh. "What about yourself?"

They told him their plans and talked away about things past and future until fatigue overcame them and they dropped into the most comfortable postures they

could, and managed to get intermittent jerks of sleep until morning.

"Fifteen minutes' stop here," said Hugh, waking up. "Let's get out for a breath. Well, isn't that air great!" They stretched their limbs, threw back their heads, and sniffed the scented gale.

"There's something in this Western air that makes a man feel good," Hugh said. "You square your shoulders and look things in the face. When do we get to Winnipeg?"

"That's where I drop off," said another man, joining the group. "If any of you men want corner lots on Portage Avenue or Broadway, just call at my office."

"Going in for real estate?"

"Certainly. That will be the most important business out here for the next century or so."

"I question if it will," said the theologue, looking towards the colonist car with its swarthy occupants. "There's the business of the next century—making decent citizens out of a crew like that."

They all agreed. "It looks a hopeless undertaking to make Canadians out of those sheepskin coats," said one student.

"Not more so than with our own forebears," Hugh contended. "My grandfather landed in the kilts and I suppose he looked hopeless to the French."

"There's one thing," said his friend, "the country that gets the immigrant gets the best of the country left behind."

"That's not always the case," Hugh argued. "It may have been true once, before immigration became a traffic."

Winnipeg smiled a broad welcome when they finally arrived. The limitless breadth of the prairies was featured in her streets, the solidity of Western business was

embodied in her substantial buildings. The world looked wide and very fair seen through her eyes.

"Hullo, you fellows! Thought I'd catch some of you about this time of year! How are you, anyway? Stewart, shake! Glad to see you."

Hugh could scarcely bring himself to believe that this breezy Westerner was the indolent Fyfe Boulding of college days. Established though he was in this Western metropolis, and a mouthpiece of its charms, he was hungry for a bit of old academic life, and had found time to dash to the station in the hope of meeting old confederates.

He annexed Hugh and the theologue immediately. "Look here!" he said. "You fellows want to put the day in here. Can't you moosey round a little till lunch and I'll stand treat at the Alexandra? Then I'll show you the city. I'm an old hand at it now. I dropped college last Winter and since then I've branched out into a real lad o' pairts."

He would take no refusals, and accordingly, early that afternoon, they found themselves in a splendid motor, bowling out River Avenue, while Fyfe, from his seat beside the chauffeur, pointed out the charms of old Fort Garry, how much per foot frontage, where the moneyed men lived, just which way the city was growing, the improvements to this part, the foreign population of that, until their heads were whirling. "There's a fine car," he would say. "Belongs to a Mr. So-and-so, made his pile in such and such, that's their house we're passing now, cost so much per foot frontage and so much for furnishing."

Presently their talk became more personal. Fyfe began to enquire about the students he used to know. "How's the Campbell kid?" he asked, leaning over the seat of the

car as they whirled along the crescent, "Miriam, I mean. Did she get her sheepskin?"

Now Hugh, having fallen out with or drifted apart from Miriam Campbell this last year, with no explanation on either side, should not have resented the familiar tone in which her name was mentioned, especially since they were cousins. But resent it he did. For he remembered that Miriam used to be on friendly terms with this old athletic rival of his. He answered briefly that he had scarcely seen her these last few months, but that, yes, she had graduated with very good standing.

"Nice girl she is," Fyfe reminisced, biting his gloved finger, reflectively. "Say, though, there's a little American here that beats the Ottawa girls all hollow. She and I are great pals. Shouldn't wonder if we'd hit the same trail, eventually. I'd like to introduce you, but it might be a risk." He ran his eye over Hugh significantly. The other man laughed. Hugh nodded, smiling briefly. He was still put out that Miriam's name should be dragged into the conversation only to suffer in comparison with that of some new charmer.

"What about her cousin?" Fyfe continued, with lowered tone, although everything he said was perfectly audible to the rest. "Sedley Danvers, I mean. Does he still have to watch his wife?"

Hugh looked blank a moment, then interested. "I did not know of it. I will not be hearing any city talk," he said with his strong Highland accent, now excited and off guard. "Was his wife after being a flirt, then?"

Fyfe laughed satirically. "Just what you might notice. Any one she could pick up."

Hugh recalled with no satisfaction to himself the occasions on which he must have been numbered among Mrs. Sedley Danvers' conquests. Few as these were, they were too many for his peace of mind. He had been

something of a fool not to see through her tactics, perhaps a fool in listening to tales of Miriam Campbell.

They concluded the day's festivities with a supper at the restaurant, for which Fyfe insisted on paying too. He seemed to so enjoy playing host, and to be so flush with money, that the other men concurred, and about 10 p. m. they all arrived at the depot in the best of spirits, to board No. 97 for the farther West.

CHAPTER XXII: EXITS AND ENTRANCES

"They have their exits and their entrances."
—*As You Like It,* Act II, Sc. 7.

Elizabeth Rutherford sat by the nursery fire drinking a large cup of cocoa.

"Can you take another, Mrs. Rutherford? There's more in the jug. You'd better have it if you can."

"I really feel as though I couldn't, but—well, for your sweet sake, Baby." She filled up the cup again.

"You haven't put on any of his pretty robes yet." She turned to the nurse, reproachfully. "Won't you dress him up a little this afternoon? He's three weeks old, you know."

"Poor honey bunch, he's happier far in flannelette," the nurse rejoined, giving a pat to the little bundle on her knees. "Did his mother want to sacrifice his comfort to her vanity? Well, it was mean, so it was." She rose and placed him in the padded basket, then turned to the bureau-drawer. "Which dress do you want on him, Mrs. Rutherford?"

"Look, Nurse, he's going to cry. Hadn't I better take him?"

The nurse set back the pile of white skirts deliberately. "Well, suppose he does cry a little. It won't hurt him, Mrs. Rutherford. It shows he has a good pair of lungs. Now you must sit still. He wants you to come to him. Just show him he isn't going to be pampered."

"Oh, you don't think he knows as early as this?" Elizabeth exclaimed, half-sceptical, half-rapturous at the idea of this budding intelligence.

"Knows? Of course he does," the nurse affirmed with remarkable assurance. "He's saying as plainly as can be, 'Come, mother, quick, I want some attention.'"

"Perhaps he has a pain," the young mother cried, in an agony of longing to defy the nurse and assert her maternal prerogative.

"Oh, nonsense!" that young woman declared. *"You'll* soon give him a pain, mother, if you get so excited every time he squeals."

But the demands became more insistent and Elizabeth was certain that Baby was hungry. That was a hunger cry, she knew. She turned to her pamphlet, "Mother and Babe," which described in detail the various wails and their significance. But it lacked twenty minutes to the regular feeding-hour and the nurse was obdurate. She pronounced it colic and proceeded to unroll the flannel bundle by the fire, applying hot wads of flannel to ten infinitesimal pink toes on the ends of two vigorous little limbs. Still the cries increased and no amount of stomach-rubbing or heat seemed to lessen its unhappiness. Elizabeth half rose from her chair and made as though to take the baby. Nurse counselled her to keep quiet and not to worry. She would have plenty of occasions similar to this before long. It wasn't altogether colic, but a little bit of temper, she thought. Elizabeth rebelled at that. A temper so pronounced at three weeks seemed to her the height of absurdity. Not a bit of it, the nurse assured her. She had seen babies three days old scratch like little wildcats. Elizabeth's cheeks burned with indignation. There was no knowing how she might have retorted had not a brisk little rat-a-tat-tat sounded on the nursery door, and a cheery, round-eyed little woman inserted her plump body. By her came trundling Miss Vivian Alicia Rutherford, tightly encased in bright blue coat and bonnet.

"Hoity-toity! What have we here? Dear me! Dear me! What a terrible fuss! How are you, dear? How comfortable you look! I always said I never had a good rest until one of the babies came." Mrs. Dan bent down and implanted a kiss on Elizabeth's flushed cheek. She felt that she had her exalted sister-in-law on a common plane now.

Vivian rolled on to a hassock and viewed the nursery equipment with a round stare. A plate of fruit nearby fascinated her, and a nursing-bottle seemed to recall bygone refections.

Still the baby wailed. Mrs. Dan with a bright, familiar nod in the nurse's direction proceeded to warm her plump hands at the fire, preparatory to taking the baby. But she reckoned without her host. Mrs. Dan Rutherford, as the mother of three sturdy youngsters, might pose as an authority in the eyes of some young mammas, but *she,* graduate nurse, was in no mind to brook interference with her case.

"Come along, then," said the Mother-of-Three, holding out experienced, if short, arms. "Come along, poor baby, and we'll see what's the matter with you."

But the baby having no volition and the nurse no inclination, matters remained in *statu quo.*

"Give him to me, Nurse," said little Mrs. Dan, with the assurance born of long acquaintance.

"Why should I give him to you?" the nurse asked, with a touch of asperity. "He has colic, and I'm warming his stomach."

The round eyes took on an owl-like expression. "He's starving, *I* should say," she pronounced with all the stored-up wisdom of a threefold experience.

"That's what *I* think, Clara," Elizabeth asserted, to Mrs. Dan's delight, "but it's not time yet," glancing with troubled eyes at the clock.

"Time? It's long past time if you count by his appetite."

"And that is precisely what we do not go by," said the nurse with a professional smile. "Otherwise you would have wind on his stomach, restlessness and all sorts of troubles for his poor mother."

"Nonsense! I never saw a baby yet, restless after a good feed. There's Elmer now, he'd take his nursing and go off to sleep, sound as a ground hog, but Claude would lie on his back for an hour.—For mercy's sake, Vivian!"

Grown dormant from the combined effects of tight clothes and a grate-fire, the child rolled suddenly off the hassock and struck her head against the fender. Her yells mingled with the baby's wailing created such a hubbub in the nursery that the nurse bundled them out, mother and child, and to Elizabeth's unspeakable relief deposited her tiny son in her arms, although it was a full three minutes before the prescribed hour.

She was sitting there alone in the full delight of motherhood, crooning over the wee thing held close to her, and thinking of the day she had longed to claim Vivian for her own, when a sound of subdued excitement below attracted her attention. A moment later the door opened quietly and her mother stepped inside.

"My dear girl!" she said, stooping to kiss her. "I am so glad to see you around like this. How is my little grandson?"

The greeting was natural enough, but there was something in her mother's manner that Elizabeth at once detected. "What is wrong, mother?" she asked in her calm, straightforward way.

"Wrong? Why what do you mean, dear?" her mother parried.

"Well, I know there is something," the girl rejoined

quietly, "and worrying about it will do me far more harm than knowing the worst at once."

"Oh, there's no worst—nothing terrible like that. Why, it's only a little annoyance about Cora. She seems to have come into the family mainly for that purpose."

"Have they had a quarrel?"

"Sedley never quarrels, Elizabeth, as you know. But I think Cora was worked up over some trifle."

"She generally is. What was it this time?"

"Why, Tom was taking her to task for the people she consorted with, and she fancied that Sedley had incited him and charged him with doing so. Sedley was too much hurt to deny it, and she went off in a tempest and bought her ticket to Toronto. Her husband followed and found her coming out of one of the theatres with that Fyfe Boulding—no less! Sedley brought her home on the train just now."

Elizabeth's exclamation recalled her mother. "Now, I had no right to excite you like this. You must not think another bit about her. But what a life that poor boy leads! Elizabeth, I have even thought of separation."

"Tom has said that a dozen times," Elizabeth was beginning, when the nurse came in briskly, tray in hand.

"Baby asleep?" she said. "Come to my arms, you bundle of charms. I'll put you in your crib." She glanced swiftly at the young mother to see if she were upset. No, Elizabeth seemed quite tranquil.

Mrs. Danvers rose. "Now, I think you should lie down, my dear. What do you say, Nurse?"

"I am just going to send her to bed," said that young lady easily, "after she has eaten her supper. I have all sorts of things here that she must take first, though."

"I think you need a nap yourself, Nurse," Elizabeth said, smiling over the tea-tray.

"Who? I? Bless you, we aren't supposed to think of such things as naps, Mrs. Rutherford. I was nursing a case of nervous breakdown last year, and I can tell you it was a bad case—to nurse. As soon as I would have her bathed at night and given an alcohol rub, and put four hot-water bottles around her to make her comfortable and taken her refreshment and said I thought I would make ready for night myself, that I needed some sleep, she would begin to sob and cry—'Sleep? I don't see why *you* need sleep. I thought you were a *trained* nurse!' "

Elizabeth's laugh had the tonic effect on her nerves that the nurse intended. The arrival of a florist's box completed the cure.

"How simply charming of him!" exclaimed the young mother, lifting out the fragrant, long-stemmed roses in delight. "But he should never have been so extravagant, that 'Mr. Hugh Stewart' "—she fingered the card in gentle protest—"Never in this world. The little that I ever did for him has been repaid time and again, if one can speak of returning kindness. But, of course, I see now." She laughed lightly. "He takes a *cousinly* interest in me. And here's a new term of college starting for him, and *no Miriam!* I must try to make up for the loss."

It was indeed more of a loss than Hugh had dreamed. The summer had sped, fleet-footed. Behold his last year fronting him! Back again in the old charmed circle, from which the charm had someway gone.

Hugh was darting up the stairs of the old Arts building, three steps at a time, when he knocked right into the Professor of Economics.

"I beg your pardon, Professor," he exclaimed in consternation, "I'm awfully clumsy."

"That's all right, Mr. Stewart." The little nod and the smile lighting up the far corners of the face were quite friendly. "Were you on your way to the Debating Society, Mr. Stewart?"

"Not this afternoon, Professor. I'm going to the library for some ammunition on that essay you gave us."

"Oh, yes. Well, there are some books on that line that came in just yesterday. You might be interested in seeing them, and perhaps get some points. They're critical rather than constructive."

He turned with Hugh into the library and with his magic, professional key admitted them both into the inner, book-lined circle.

"Good morning. Have you listed those books I was looking at yesterday?" he enquired genially of the head librarian.

The faint smile which acknowledged his greeting included Hugh in its range.

"No, not yet, Professor. Another case came in this morning, and there are some reviews among them more in line with what you wanted. I left them for you to compare." Moving towards a side-table, she picked out a volume. "About chapter four he seems to come to grips with his subject."

The Professor glanced through the book. "Who was it that said an author of a book without an index should be hanged, drawn and quartered? Yes, there are some paragraphs here rather good. I'll leave them with you, Stewart. I'm due in the Senate-room shortly. And by the way, we'll see you to-night at our home? Not at all, we are counting on having you."

Hugh dropped into a chair in the alcove and essayed the fifth chapter. From far down on the campus sounded the crisp calls of the tennis players. The clicking of the typewriters in the next office mingled with the laugh-

ter of a group of girls out by the stairway. From Divinity Hall came the chanting chorus of its votaries—

"Divinity, Divinity,
Faith, Hope and Charity,
Swallow-tail coat and poverty."

Yet, although the prescribed calm brooded over the library proper, Hugh could not study. Because it was too early in the term for one's real grind? Perhaps. Because so many of "the fellows" had graduated, and so many new faces made the college strange? Yes, and perhaps because he felt, deep at heart, a loneliness, which was not only for Miriam Campbell, but for that nearer, though more distant friend, who would no more "rule the boys." His thoughts passed to that quiet, sad spot off in Cataraqui. He as quickly recalled them. Geordie was not there. The motto on the tablet to his memory told his dwelling-place,—

"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice."

His spirit still pervaded Queen's. In every building, in every enterprise, in every lecture, and in every student-mind throughout the University, he was an active force. If ever the song had meaning, it was now. If ever the students were inspired, it was when they sang,

"Rule, rule, Geordie,
Geordie rules the boys.
Oh, what a happy man is Geordie!"

CHAPTER XXIII: A CARELESS TRIFLE

"Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle."

—*Macbeth*, Act I, Sc. 4.

Miriam came running up the stairs and burst into the room.

"Quietly, quietly, my dear girl," her mother began. Then, seeing signs of excitement, "And what is the disturbance now? Another college student in town?"

Miriam laughed, large-heartedly. "You'll never guess." She flourished a thin sheet of blue paper. "It's from Halifax and I've got the appointment in English Literature and History at the Ladies' College. The teacher they engaged last fall got married suddenly and I'm next on the list."

Mrs. Campbell felt an inward thrill of gratification. She liked to have her daughters sought after. But, as was her wont, she restrained her feelings.

"And do you think you would like to go?" she replied, with as much reserve as though the pecuniary returns were a matter of no moment. Even to her own family Mrs. Campbell kept up a show of affluence.

"I'd be very foolish not to," Miriam laughed. "I expect there would be a good many others glad if I didn't."

That remark struck the right chord for the Campbell family. They enjoyed envy.

Pauline broke in quickly. "I'm mighty glad for some

other girl I know to find she isn't the only, only. She'll be quite impressed when she hears of it."

Miriam was sure their friend would be only too glad. She had been hoping the right opening would appear.

"Oh, yes," Pauline changed front quite suddenly. "You've both had such a feverish idea of life at college that you think a normal existence with your own family is something to be escaped from as quickly as possible. I suppose you're glad to leave the housework."

Miriam, with that letter in her hand, was proof against worse thrusts than this. "Of course I am," she retorted. "But if you think you can fill the position in Halifax I'll stay home."

Pauline was nettled. A Miriam who could retort like that was not to her liking. Her mother took up the cudgels.

"That's not at all sisterly, Miriam. I am afraid your offer may make you overbearing."

"What, Miriam overbearing?" Mr. Campbell joined the group. "That's a new state of affairs. Where's the blushing schoolgirl that used to be around here? I suppose the college boys put that out of your head."

"Oh, Miriam gets that swing to her shoulders only when she is home," Pauline hastened to put in. "At college she'd slink along the hall as though she was afraid of her life some man would look at her."

"That's not your attitude, Pauline," Mr. Campbell teased.

"No, Pauline is only afraid that they may *not* look at her," Miriam retorted. "And instead of slinking she sidles and ogles."

This was an unreckoned frontal attack on Pauline, who was not accustomed to have her broadsides returned. She found refuge in the old adjuration. "Now, don't try to get smart, kid."

Miriam's laugh was quite unabashed. "I haven't told you all, Mother," she continued. "Uncle Owen sent me money to go up to Kingston for the Conversat. Isn't he wonderfully kind?"

"He is, indeed," Mrs. Campbell said slowly. It irked her, though, to receive gifts from anybody. "Of course you will find it easy to refuse," she continued, "since you are considering this proposition from Halifax. When would your duties commence, should you accept?"

Miriam laughed inwardly at the way her mother parried the decision. But she answered, soberly enough. "Why, school opens on the ninth. No, of course I can't go for the Conversat. But I'm going to write Uncle Owen and say that if they don't mind I'll come for Christmas instead."

Pauline raised all sorts of objections immediately, and Miriam might have found some difficulty in carrying through her plan, had not her father lent his support, and actually bought her ticket for Kingston.

There was a stir of excitement in the girl's blood at the thought of seeing all the old friends again. It seemed infinitely far removed, that beautiful April day of graduation, those good-byes to old friends, college, the Limestone City. Now she returned in a new capacity. How glad she would be to see them all again! The story of Cora's mad trip to Toronto had duly reached Ottawa and the Campbells had been properly shocked. It was all very well for Cora to pretend they had happened to meet in Toronto. The meeting had been planned! Pauline's sense of the proprieties was very nice, however near to the border-land she might herself venture and she had righteously censured Cora and commiserated with Sedley on the incident. Young Boulding, being a relative of their own, had escaped more easily, for Pauline could forgive much in a man, and especially in one with

whom she had enjoyed and expected to enjoy so many dimly-lighted confidences.

Miriam herself was heartbroken for Sedley. And the one jarring note in her joyful anticipation of Christmas was the thought of the strained relations which must exist in his home.

But if they existed, she felt nothing of them. The very morning after she arrived in Kingston, from the bay-window of the guest-room she saw Sedley swinging up the steps and heard his old full laugh in the hall below. And then she heard him call, "I wonder if there's any one from the Ottawa Valley in this house!"

Hastily fastening her collar, Miriam opened her door and ran down the stairs, stumbling against Sedley at the bottom. "What's this about Halifax?" he demanded a moment later.

"I'm appointed teacher in English Literature and History at the Ladies' College, Sedley."

The little note of importance in her announcement amused him vastly.

"You are, eh?" he returned, smiling broadly. "Poor Ladies' College!"

Miriam's sudden discomfiture only heightened his delight.

"You'll be giving a special course in Longfellow, won't you," he pursued, "down in that Evangeline country? Of course you will. And setting all the young Blue Noses to learning,

> " 'There is no light at all in heaven,
> But the white light of stars.
> I give the first watch of the night
> To the red planet Mars.' "

He threw back his head and laughed immoderately.

Dr. Danvers came out of the surgery where he had

been reading the paper. He held his glasses between thumb and forefinger and his fresh face was alight with the glow of the morning. "Well, Sedley," he said, "what do you think of our college girl? Hasn't done too badly, eh?"

Sedley was looking at his young cousin steadily. "Oh, she's a great girl," was all he vouchsafed, but his smiling eyes said more.

It seemed as though every one vied with every one else to make this Christmas season the happiest possible. Miriam felt that they were trying to give her a genuine old send-off, and her spirits rose high, with the excitement and her new prospects. The snap in the air, the challenge of the snow-drifts, and the amorous blue of the sky went to her head like a draught of wine. Moreover she could not help feeling a certain interest in the fact that Hugh Stewart was spending his holidays in town. She saw him in church the first Sunday that she was there, sitting over at the side, his head outlined against the stained-glass windows. And though she turned swiftly to her hymn-book, nursing her pique and reminding herself that their friendship was past, she could not help one or two brief glances in his direction, nor was there lacking distinct disappointment when she lost all sight of him in the outgoing throng.

That she did so was Hugh's own fault. Did you ever feel so lonely, so anxious for company that you hid yourself away from the very thing you craved? Hugh was about as homesick as it was possible for a man to be, a thousand miles from his family, in a boarding-house, a week before Christmas, with his chums away and his special girl friend cross with him for no reason at all. He had struggled to keep away from church, where he knew he would see Miriam, but invisible cords drew him thither. And the same mysterious powers led him to

a seat exactly on a line with Dr. Danvers' pew. He ventured a quick glance, then coloured and looked straight ahead. She was as handsome as gold! Actually, she was, and he had never noticed that before! John Hielanman was waking up! No, but the girl really had improved fifty per cent. since the holidays, he kept telling himself. And so she was rather a sport, was she? Apt to be too talkative and friendly with the sterner sex? Hugh frowned at the hymn-book rack. That wasn't nice. No, not at all! Swiftly he shot another glance across the crowd. She had her coat off—what a lovely dress! No, he could see no details, but the one patent fact sufficed—Tartan, and scarlet, at that! Now fates get in your work! You have the Scotchman down!

Had Miriam ever dreamed of such witchery lurking in the shimmering folds of the silken plaid, for a blouse length of which she had exchanged some of Mrs. Dan Rutherford's filthy lucre? Or was it merely something in her own blood that needed letting? However it was, she felt complacent and at ease that morning and quite ready to give the erring a chance to atone.

But the erring, in the person of the tall, square-shouldered Nova Scotian, was not so easily waylaid. And though the gleam of the scarlet waist and the winning light in the brown eyes made a strong pull girl-wards, Hugh resolutely turned his stubborn curly head in another direction and forged through the crowd, home to his boarding-house dinner. Hard of heart and stiff-necked, he resolved that she and she alone must make the move.

Christmas came on Friday, and all the earlier days of the week were a whirl of anticipation and excitement. The doctor's telephone and bell kept pace with the general rush. Grippe was epidemic and one after another fell victim while the great march of gift-seekers swept

relentlessly past. It was at that stage in the proceedings when Christmas presents were bought in reckless half-dozens and fair eyes were strained by burning midnight oil, when people shopped with a sickly cast of countenance, and the air in the stores was laden and thick. This was the season when time was reckoned in terms of "shopping days," when nerves were at strain, limbs over-tired, brains over-taxed, and a great cry for release arose from struggling humanity—release from a burden self-imposed, from a poor, human, distorted conception of a fitting celebration of the birth of peace!

And yet there was the other side of the picture. And for many Christmas-tide drew near in purity and selflessness. An undercurrent of still joy pulsed in their hearts. The air was humming with music, the stars pointed fingers of silver light, the earth was flooded with radiance wherein duties shone as delights.

Miriam coaxed her aunt to let her decorate the house with greens. The family reunion was to be held at the doctor's that year. "We can have them taken down before they dry and fall," she said; "and they smell so Christmasy. Sedley loves them, Aunt Ellen. It will make the house delightful." So her aunt concurred and the doctor's man drove her out to the woods, where they filled the cutter high with greens.

Christmas morning Miriam was awake very early. She stole downstairs before any one was up, to put her presents on the tree. The house was warm and sweet with the heavy fragrance of the spruce. The shaded hush of the drawing-room with the tall Christmas-tree looming out of the shadows was ghost-like. She gave an involuntary shiver, despite the warmth of the room. Yet it was very cold outside, to judge from the frost on the panes. Glorious for their skate on the lake!

There was something awesome in this early Christmas

morning. She stole to the window and looked across the silent park. Through the tips of the evergreens the light was creeping. Cold and white lay the snow beneath.

"Before the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cock-crow,
Jesus Christ was born;
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made,
Born a stranger."

It came to her in sudden illumination, the solemn, lonely birth of the Saviour of the World. His still lonely heart brooding over the world where He had lived, waiting to catch the faintest note of real welcome, and, as if in answer, the lines of an old English carol sang themselves in her heart.

"Sleep, in my soul enshrined rest:
Here find Thy cradle neatly drest:
Forsake me not when sore distrest,
Immanuel, my Brother blest."

There was a full table at the doctor's for Christmas dinner. Cora said for mercy's sake to bring Baby Caspar down, for she never could enjoy her dinner with an unlucky number like thirteen. When Tom reminded her that it was Friday as well she gave a little shriek of horror which made Fyfe Boulding laugh.

How under the heavens did Fyfe manage to be everywhere? How could they stand the sight of him? What was he doing in Kingston, after settling in Winnipeg? Or was it Regina? Did he ever settle anywhere? It must have required some grace on Sedley's part to tolerate his presence.

There was a sound of little feet scuffling below, small

voices piping up, and a general scramble and turmoil. "There are Clara and Dan with the kiddies," Elizabeth exclaimed. "Why, I'm glad Baby's asleep. I'll bank him up on the couch and we can go down for dinner. Yes, there's the bell. Oh, I should have helped mother."

But Mrs. Danvers emerged radiant from the dining-room. Christmas was her special day of all the year. Her zeal and enthusiasm were limitless, and from anything in which Mrs. Danvers put her heart there was not an item lacking. She greeted them all with charming grace and led the way to the dining-table, her cheeks like roses, her dark eyes sparkling. Sedley and Elizabeth could hardly escape their winning ways with such cordial and warm-hearted parents.

Dinner went off with a swing. At its conclusion Claude and Elmer Rutherford rolled out of the dining-room in a high state of satisfaction.

"Every one off for the lake!" Tom called. Elizabeth was upstairs, attending to the baby. "Ice is perfect, weather is perfect, hurry up and get your skates."

"You aren't going to attempt skating, are you, Elizabeth?" The round-eyed look of concern in Mrs. Dan's eyes as she called up to her sister-in-law delighted Elizabeth's husband.

"Of course she is," he cried. "Grandmother is going to mind the baby. Come on yourself, Clara!"

Clara rather liked being asked, but protested that she would not risk catching cold. There was nothing more dangerous than standing around on cold ice. Elizabeth was certainly unconcerned to leave the baby in *that* fashion. She could never bring herself to do it, though Claude would never cry after her, but Elmer, now, used to lie on the floor and scream until he was blue in the face. And Vivian——

Tom cut short her discursions by bundling them out,

skates and all, Sedley, Cora, Miriam, Elizabeth, and Fyfe. They made a merry, jingling party, swinging down the street in the bright Christmas sunshine.

"For mercy's sake, don't go so fast, Tom," Cora called out as they went down the steep bank. "I'll be on my head in a moment."

Sedley turned to give her his hand, smiling up into her petulant face. "Tom thinks he's late for a lecture," he put in. "Hurry, Tom, I hear them calling 'Slope! Slope!' "

"It's a slope, sure enough," young Boulding drawled, plunging and sliding after them.

Every one laughed. Laughter came easily in that crisp air. They all sat down on the hulk of a rowboat to put on their skates.

"My, this feels good," Miriam cried, lacing up her boots. "I wonder if they'll have skating in Halifax."

"You must not be so concerned about dissipation." Tom shook his head at her. "The teacher of English Literature and History will have to be above such frivolities. Oh, what an important person you will be!" He swelled out his chest and squared his thin shoulders.

Cora laughed shrilly at the pantomime. She thought it was a joke on Miriam. Tom followed up his advantage by asking her for a skate. He may have had an ulterior motive, for certain it is he looked satisfied at seeing Elizabeth follow with Fyfe Boulding. That left the last two paired as he wished.

On to the great lake, thronged with people, and beyond the crowds, up the shining expanse they sped, pleasure in every movement. The cool fresh air blew in their faces, the even strokes made their pulses stir, and every nerve tingled with the warm rush of blood through their veins as they "hissed along the polished ice."

Fyfe was a splendid skater and Elizabeth found her

old-time swing returning. No one had looked more graceful on the ice than Elizabeth Danvers in her college days, and Tom from behind watched her graceful, lithe figure with a glow of pride. His own pace was slower, for Cora was constantly complaining of her boots or her skates or the rough ice.

Miriam and Sedley overtook them in a few moments.

"These beastly boots," Cora was saying. "My ankles turn around inside of them. Why did you lace them so loosely, Sedley?" She knelt on the ice and began to jerk at the laces.

Sedley shivered suddenly. "What's the matter?" Tom asked. "Are you cold? You're not taking grippe, are you?"

Sedley shook his head. "Oh, it's nothing," he said. He took off his coat and put it on the ice. "If you'll sit down I'll fix them, Cora," kneeling in front of her.

"Perhaps they'd better not wait for us," Cora said. "I think the other boot needs fixing too."

Tom saw her little ruse but was too quick for her. "I'll fix it for you," he cried. "You must not keep Sedley too long without his overcoat. It's getting cold." He dropped beside Sedley, while Miriam moved back and forth. "There, now, away you go, you two. We'll follow more slowly. We were just getting started talking about Ottawa."

Sedley held out his hand to Miriam, smilingly. "How fast can you skate?" he asked. "I want to get my blood moving. Strike out now, that's the way!"

They fell into long, even strides, joying in the rhythmic movement, and soon out-distanced Tom and Cora. The crowd was thinner now. Not many ventured as far up as this. Gradually they slackened their pace. The wide silence of the ice with only the booming *crack* at inter-

vals was both solitary and companionable. Sedley, looking behind saw a lone man following.

"It's young Stewart," he said, turning to Miriam with a sudden questioning smile. "Shall we wait for him?"

Miriam was too vividly joyous for embarrassment. "Hugh Stewart?" she said, throwing up her chin. "Oh, we're not speaking. Come on!" She pulled Sedley forward gaily.

"What's the trouble?" Sedley asked quickly.

"Oh, I don't know. He's nursing some imaginary grievance."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Sedley. Then, suddenly facing her. "Stewart is very fond of you, Miriam," he said.

The hand he held trembled slightly. "No, he's not!" she denied.

"What makes you think he isn't?"

She shook her head knowingly. Sedley looked at her a moment, then pressed his enquiries further. "You like him, don't you?"

Miriam faltered. With any one else she might have parried. With Sedley she must always tell the absolute truth. "Yes, I d-do," she stammered, defiantly.

"Of course you do!" Sedley laughed exultantly. Then his face grew strangely tender. "Miriam, my dear little cousin," he said, very earnestly, "if love, such as I might imagine his to be, ever comes to you, do not hold it lightly. Love, strong and true—life has no richer treasure."

"Sedley!" Elizabeth's voice called out from far up on the bank. "Here I am! Where are the rest?"

"On behind. Where's Boulding?" Sedley shouted, striking nearer.

"That's what I'm wondering. I'm nervous," she returned. "I was tired and he said he'd skate farther up

and come back. He skated off backwards. I don't know what's keeping him. I want to get back to Baby."

Then it came, sinister, direful, awful, that cry for succour. "Help! Help! Help!" up the shore of the lake.

The colour fled from the girls' faces. Elizabeth gave a convulsive sob.

"He's drowning, Sedley, quick!"

She scrambled, falling down the bank. Sedley was already speeding towards the sound. "Keep back!" he shouted. "The ice is thin. Keep off from danger! Back, girls, go back!"

But still the girls followed, screaming for help as they went, on and on, their cries carried backward on the wind. And then they saw the sight they never would forget, a black spot of water with jagged ice around, and Sedley on hands and knees creeping over nearer, nearer, cautiously stretching his hockey stick to where two hands were clutching at the treacherous rim, nearer, nearer——

Miriam turning in an agony of terror saw that lonely figure striking out towards them.

"Hugh, Hugh!" she cried in agony. "Hurry! Tom! Come, Tom!"

They are coming now from all quarters. The ice is blackening with fleet figures. Will it be too late? The girls are lying flat and Elizabeth has caught Sedley's foot and Miriam, Elizabeth's, and the living chain moves nearer. Slowly, slowly, and oh, how carefully! Up, up, and cautiously, cautiously! Out of the deathly waters, over the treacherous edge, Fyfe Boulding is drawn to safety. Then, just as the cry of thanksgiving rises to their lips, the ice gives way under the double strain, there is an ominous crack, the sound of a heavy body splashing down, and as Boulding creeps to safety Sedley Danvers goes down, down, into the icy waters of Lake Ontario.

Stretch out your stick to save him now! If he can come up! Will he strike under the ice? Will the current bear him away? Or is there a chance, one chance in a thousand, that he may be seen again? The crowd presses nearer, strong arms stretch out to aid. Yes, there it is, that dark, struggling, helpless object at the edge of the break. Too late! Down, down it goes, while a cry of anguish breaks from the lips of the onlookers. Once more, once more it comes. Now, men, now! They reach him, they catch him, they drag him out, white and sodden and spent. Miriam, turning in horror from that death-like form, looks into Hugh Stewart's face.

"Oh, Hugh!" she screams. "Take me home! Take me home! Sedley is drowned! Don't you see? Sedley is drowned!"

But no! It is a collapse, consequent on shock and exhaustion. They have carried him home to his father's house, and half the doctors of Kingston are there to save this doctor's son. Cora's raving hysteria has been quieted by a strong sedative and the struggle for life begins. Poor Fyfe Boulding, in an adjoining room, rolled in hot blankets, learns that their great fear is of congestion. Had he Boulding's physique there might be hope. But the doctors say his strength is depleted. He cannot put up a good fight. Long hours of confinement, months of strain, nervous depression, have drawn upon his little stock in trade, and the foe makes rapid strides.

Miriam, praying, crouched outside the door; Elizabeth, for her baby's sake bravely trying still to hope; his mother in the calmness of absolute despair; the doctor, his father, with all the other doctors, working and praying and hoping always; they each pass through their own Gethsemane. If it were any one but Sedley, fine, pure-souled, heroic Sedley, with his life of crushing disappointment and

noble endeavour, any one but Sedley, radiant, tender, great-hearted Sedley. Must he be the one to go?

Through Christmas night they watch and wait. Over and over, pitifully clinging to the words, Miriam repeats the lines of that old carol. When had she said it before? Was it only this morning, this Christmas morning?

> "Forsake me not when sore distrest,
> Immanuel, my Brother blest."

"When sore distrest, when sore distrest. Oh, God, spare him! Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name! Spare him! Save him! Sedley! Save him!"

The long night wore away, and with the morning came news that Sedley was worse. They feared pneumonia now. Cora had slept off her first hysteria, and wanted to take her place in the sick-room. The nurse was obdurate. There was danger of a scene by the door of his room had not Tom been called. Cora's mind was still dulled and she made little resistance when he took her away. She did not realise, nor could they bring themselves to tell her, how Sedley was yielding in the struggle.

And so the hours dragged on and another day came and went, and hope grew fainter. It was on Sunday evening just as the church bells were sounding out their call to divine service and the last worshippers were gathering inside the lighted doors, that Sedley Danvers heard the one clear call.

Miriam was sitting crouched in her old corner outside his door. It was ajar, but a screen hid all inside the room from her view. The pathos of this quiet, snowy Sabbath evening and the sound of the bells, and the stillness which followed, drew tears from eyes which she had thought were too spent for weeping. Then in a fresh abandonment of grief she buried her face in her arms and gave way completely.

In her convulsive sobbing she did not hear the movement inside his room. She felt someone brush past her as she crouched in the shadows—Elizabeth—it was Elizabeth. "Come Miriam, quick!" and she found herself passing through the door and around the screen and then—— His mother knelt by his side, her face against his white hand. The doctor—what a grey face her uncle had!—his head was pressed against the wall, but he was watching. Cora was not there. Even in that moment Miriam was glad of this. What if she had marred these last quiet minutes with some hysterical outburst! Miriam looked with a curious, detached interest at all the occupants of the room, and at the last her eyes rested on that dear face among the pillows. Sedley was just at the borderland.

"Cora," he whispered. It was the only word he had spoken.

His mother's face flushed. She signed to Tom to bring her.

"Cora!" he whispered again, more faintly now. But he could not linger. There had come a Herald from the King, commanding his presence in fields of service broader than were given Sedley Danvers here to cultivate, where his high endeavour would be unhampered by earthly weights, and his lofty ideals would escape the blight of the mistake of time and circumstances, and come to an abiding fruition. And Sedley "passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!"

CHAPTER XXIV: PLAYING HOLIDAYS

"If all the year were playing holidays
To sport would be as tedious as to work."
—*King Henry IV*, Part I, Act I, Sc. 2.

For three days, rain had come down in torrents. It had poured out of the lowering clouds as though it could never stop. It had flooded the streets, turning gutters into streams, and drains into miniature waterfalls. Small rivulets had flowed over the pavements, inundating the unwary pedestrians, and the horses splashed along the muddy streets. Halifax had presented a most unattractive picture.

And then the sun had parted its cloud-curtains and showed its shining face. The air had left its dampness in old Neptune's keeping and came clear and dry into the nostrils, and the madcap winds had played havoc up and down the hilly streets until the grey old sea-girt city forgot its tears and turned its very best face to the world on that charming morning in May.

Hurrying along Pleasant Street, head erect, eyes bright, steps brisk, the young teacher of English literature in the Ladies' College made her way downtown. It was Empire Day—a holiday, which made the excursion a possible thing, and there were things she needed.

Miriam Campbell's spirits had been very low these last few days. It takes a superb faith or a very satisfactory environment to make it possible to defy the elements when they spell monotony. A hot wave, an old-fashioned blizzard, or howling winds may be laughed to scorn, but the monotony of steady floods of rain is most apt to be depressing.

She had tried to rise above it. With her old recourse to poetry she had quoted belligerently,

"Pour rain!
You cannot get into my heart,
Or put out the fire in my soul.
I am here in a beautiful realm apart
Where the angels of light patrol.
You are good, it is true, for the flowers and the grain,
But you beat at the door of my heart in vain."

She had come through nearly five months of new experiences. It had been far more pleasant than even her anticipation. How true it is that one's troubles come from an unexpected quarter! Miriam's had not been from loneliness. The city was perfectly strange to her but from the outset the charm of its beautiful situation and historical interest had laid fast hold of her heart. And it would have been impossible to receive greater kindness from its hospitable citizens. She soon came to be known and invited to the homes of her pupils, to homes of the alumnæ and of other cultured people of Halifax.

Nor had Miriam suffered from embarrassment in her immediate duties. Away from the shadow of the University walls a new independence blossomed out, and she found herself more than able to live up to her reputation. Coming from "the West" she held a certain glamour for her pupils, and the distinctive flavour of her University made a pleasing variety in the intellectual circle in which she moved. She, herself, profited a good deal by coming in contact with a fresh institution of learning, and finding that the world held other colleges than her own, with their own peculiar imprint and valuation.

It was in the classroom that Miriam really scored. For, once confronted with her old friends the poets, she entirely forgot her reserve and poured into the ears of the girls before her such a flood of appreciation, criti-

cism and explanation as made them gasp. To hear her quote whole pages of poetry, to listen to her anecdotes of literary geniuses, to catch and remember the descriptive terms she gave off, was at once the despair and admiration of the classroom. She was like a pony let loose in a field of clover.

The history lessons were not at all easy. It was always difficult for Miriam to pin herself to exact data, to remember dates, to give with absolute surety the facts of a case, and for the first few weeks she was constantly backing down from some position she had taken, correcting herself, turning to her history for confirmation, and the mischievous spirits in the room were afforded great sport. But when there was occasion for descriptive powers or her imagination was given a chance, "Miss Campbell" covered over all former slips and once more made firm her footing in her pupils' estimation. Her defect as a teacher was probably just here—that she did not sufficiently draw out her scholars. That she flooded them with all the information she possessed, giving little chance to their own powers of thought and observation.

But, on the whole, Miriam felt glad over her Winter's work, and her depression was not radical. But the arrival of a letter from Elizabeth that morning, with an account of the Convocation exercises, had made her suddenly lonely, lonely for the dear, dead days beyond recall.

Elizabeth had given her a detailed account of Hugh Stewart's many honours, and as Miriam made her way along the streets she imagined herself seated in Grant Hall, watching him come to the platform and hearing the applause of the gallery. By this time he would probably be on his way to Regina, ever widening the distance between them. When would they meet again, if ever? Canada seemed a trackless waste and the prairies infinitely

removed from the girl away down by the sounding Atlantic.

She made her purchases and walked along towards a bookstore to refresh her spirits. A bookstore where you could browse at will was an untold delight. Idly she turned over two or three volumes, scanning their titles, glancing at their chapters, reading a page or so, here and there. Then she came upon one that caught her attention and held it. Leaning against the shelf, her back to the rest of the store, oblivious to all going out or in, she read on and on.

Into her dream world floated a sound oddly familiar, a tone that struck a responsive chord in her memory, a voice which she surely knew.

"Still at it? Can't stop studying?"

She stared at him a full moment as though he were as unreal as the character in the book.

"Why, Hugh!" she began in bewilderment and then coloured swiftly. "I thought you were going to Regina," she concluded.

"So I am—eventually."

"Well, you've come a long way down to get started," she laughed. "Are you staying in Halifax? When did you come?"

They walked up Barrington Street together. The fresh smell of the earth mingled with the warm breath of Spring, the grass on the Parade looked vividly green, and people were stepping gaily along the streets, joyed at the prospect of the holiday. Many interested glances were directed towards Miriam and the six feet of man beside her, his features showing clean-cut under his hat. He was telling her of his fortnight's visit to Cape Breton.

"What's it like in Spring?" she asked.

"Oh, they're seeding now. The mud is simply awful.

Alan was after telling me I'd brought some with me from Regina."

"Why, is Regina specially muddy?"

The young man laughed. "Prairie land, you know. Good for No. 1 Northern. Well, how do you like teaching?"

"Much better than I thought I would," Miriam said frankly. "There are some of our girls coming now. We had Empire exercises this morning and this afternoon's a holiday."

Hugh revolved this fact for a few minutes. The college girls passed them and he lifted his hat mechanically, missing their curious smiles. His mind was working towards a definite conclusion.

"Can't we go somewhere to celebrate?" he said finally, as though a sudden thought had visited him.

"Why I suppose we might. Where did you mean?"

Hugh's ideas as to destination were vague. He had a general feeling that he would like to entertain her in some way, to wipe off old scores. That was largely why he had come to Halifax. He had meant to buy a book and some chocolates and call at the Ladies' College.

"The Citadel?" he suggested uncertainly.

Miriam made a secret grimace. The Citadel was the last place she wanted to visit. The Spring air wakened desire for something more romantic.

"How about the North West Arm?" she hazarded.

"Why, all right!" he returned. He was a little uncertain as to what they were to do there, but as long as she wanted it——

"Would you rather I'd get a team and we'd go for a drive?" Hugh was fond of horses himself.

"No, I just feel like having a boat-ride. There's a livery on South Street. It's really hot, now. It will be glorious on the water."

And so it was. Hugh had never expected to enjoy anything as he did that afternoon. There was a ripple on the waves that sent a gurgling noise against the side of the boat, as it danced along with the even strokes of the oars. The banks on either side were all a tender green, and the slim shoots of white birch clustering near the shore mingled fascinatingly with the trunks of the maples, pines and oak trees. It was

> "In such a time as goes before the leaf,
> When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
> And nothing perfect."

"So college is over for you, too," Miriam said, musingly, trailing her fingers in the green water.

The young man nodded. "I'm not sorry either, in a good many ways."

"Oh, why?" she cried. "I was nearly heartbroken at leaving it all."

"Oh, it's fine while it lasts," he agreed. "But the time comes when you feel that college is too small for you. You want to get clear of it and get to work."

"I never worked harder in my life than I did over Senior Philosophy," she contended.

"Well, but along a certain groove, stooped over a book. This is life now." He swung back his shoulders and the boat shot ahead at the strong stroke of the oars.

"This is play," she corrected.

"Play for you," he laughed; "and life is play as well as work, isn't it? But what I meant by *'this'* was my graduation and our new duties and the wide world facing us."

"And college as a fine background," she supplemented.

"Exactly." Then, a moment later, "You'd like the West," he continued, quite irrelevantly.

"I'm sure I wouldn't."

"Yes, indeed. I know better."

"You may know the West better, but you don't know me!"

"I know you better than you do yourself, Miss Campbell!"

"Indeed you don't! You hardly know anything about me, *Mr. Stewart!*"

"Don't I? It's not my fault then. Do you know whom I saw in Winnipeg last Summer? Your Cousin Fyfe Boulding." Something mischievous lurked in his eyes. He kept them fixed on her.

Of course she had to blush. She despised herself for doing it, and Hugh for watching her.

"Did you? What is he at, there?" Very cool and unconcerned was her voice. "He's a wandering Jew, if ever there was one."

Hugh looked away across the rippling waves. "Well, his interest seemed divided between real estate and some handsome young American girl he had met who had apparently turned his head. I didn't get to meet her then. Perhaps I may this time." A wicked smile played round his mouth.

Miriam was serenely unconcerned. Blush she might at the personal turn which the conversation had taken, but the existence of the American girl stirred no pangs of jealousy. She might have given him later news of Fyfe, indeed, for she had heard from him herself, since coming to Halifax. It was a Regina law office now that held him. If Hugh thought he could worry her about Fyfe, let him try!

"Real estate!" she murmured. "I can hardly reconcile that with his Omar Khayyam. Imagine quoting,

> "'We are no other than a moving row
> Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go,'

when you were trying to push a deal."

"Just imagine!" he laughed. "They'd hit the trail!"

The bit of Western slang was quite involuntary, and they laughed together. It was drawing towards sunset, and the waves lisped against the shore. From the Dingle came the voices of adventurous picnickers, the first of the season. They were perched on the rocks, eating and chatting hilariously.

It seemed a sacrilege of Nature's loveliness to think of pulling shoreward, but Miriam remembered her duties and reluctantly spoke of them.

The idea of bringing this golden afternoon to a close put consternation into Hugh's heart. He had meant to say so much, clear up past misunderstandings, to take further steps in their friendship, and here it was time to go back. Things moved too quickly for a Scotchman. He rested on his oars a moment, looking at her in the full flood of sunset.

"Have you given up writing letters, Miss Campbell?"

"To people who don't answer them, yes."

"But if they promise and covenant and furnish security? Besides, I did answer it. Wait you, now." He pulled the oars in further, holding them with his knees, and fumbled at his watch chain.

"Did you ever see one of these?" he asked passing a charm to her.

She examined it curiously. "No. I was wondering about it all afternoon."

That sounded strange, she thought, but Hugh took no notice. "It's the foot of a prairie chicken, mounted," he told her. "I think a great deal of it. I got it from a chap out in the Land Titles office. He was killed in that wreck at Spanish River. An awfully fine fellow, he was."

Miriam handed it back, reverently.

"No, I want you to keep it." It was Hugh's turn to

look embarrassed. "It's a souvenir of the West, you know, where I'm going, and it will be a sort of hostage or surety that I'll write two for every one letter you send me."

She laughed at his sentiment, but fastened the charm to her watch chain as he had done. It would rouse the curiosity of the college girls, that prairie chicken's foot. Quietly they rowed shoreward.

"What are you doing this evening?" Hugh asked suddenly, just before they touched the dock. "My train does not go until late," he suggested.

"I'm really dreadfully sorry, but I'm due at the Orpheus Hall. The Orpheus Club have their annual concert to-night, and I've promised to help them."

"Do you sing?" he asked.

"No, but I usher."

"Usher?"

She laughed at his astonishment. "Yes, really. This is a special kind of concert, ladies only, you know. Oh, of course gentlemen are eagerly welcomed in the audience. But we do everything else, sell tickets, look after the office, usher, distribute programmes, sing, play, everything in fact. But couldn't you come anyway? The choruses are really fine. And if you can get a seat on the extreme east side, I'll be delighted to show you to it."

Hugh agreed with alacrity. Seven-thirty found him at the hall, and, although the only seat available was in the very front row, he made no objection, for there was a pleasing novelty in following in Miriam's white wake down the length of the hall. He found himself right in front of the high platform where he had to strain his head back to catch sight of the performers. They were strangers to him in any case. He was more interested in the ushers.

The place was filled, packed and overflowing. Men

there were in plenty, but all tucked away harmlessly in the seats, while the young ladies fluttered here, there and everywhere. The singers came in and took their places, the orchestra tuned up, the accompanist struck the opening chords and the programme swung along.

Despite his cramped position Hugh enjoyed it hugely. There was an abandon in this jaunt to Halifax, a freedom in the thought of Western life, that lent themselves to jollity. He applauded the numbers and laughed with the other men at the girls so much in evidence. They were preparing for a full chorus now, and the grand piano must be moved to the other side of the platform. A shout went up as a group of girls bore down upon the unwieldy mass. The difficulty was in getting it started and two or three of the ushers ran up from below to help. They grasp at the end of the instrument and pull it forward as though they would show all men how strong they are, how self-sufficient. Egged on by the cheers of the men, not gauging the force of their united strength, hilarious in their new rôle, they give a mighty push and pull. The ponderous piano skids across the sloping platform, and sways almost over the edge, with a bevy of girls underneath.

Hugh springs to his feet. With all the weight of his big body he flings himself against the tumbling mass! There is a forward rush of men, a confusion of figures, a tumult of voices, and then some one calls out shrilly, "Nobody hurt," and the audience breathes a swift, incredulous sigh of relief.

In a moment the platform is black with men—fathers, lovers, brothers, husbands, appear as by magic, crowding up the steps in eager alarm. It is pathetic and ludicrous, too, to behold these banished males, now so greatly in evidence, these mere men, who could not be tolerated in

moving the piano, yet whose strong arms in the critical moment stayed proceedings and averted an awful catastrophe.

The girls assume an air of bravado. How were they to know that the floor was worn smooth, that the platform sloped a little, and that a piano once set in motion almost runs itself? They rubbed their elbows laughingly, made light of the fright and prepared for the next number. The grand piano is injured slightly. So the smaller one is put into requisition, and the programme proceeds as before. Music hath powers to soothe, and the nerves of the audience are at concert pitch.

Out in the corridor Hugh is getting into his overcoat. He has only fifteen minutes to reach the station. The excitement nearly puts all thought of the trip out of his mind. If he could only see Miriam and make sure that she was really unhurt!

The voice at his elbow startled him. "Are you going, Mr. Stewart?"

He wheeled around. How white her face was! "Did you get hurt? I was afraid that you struck the side of the platform," he exclaimed.

"I did scrape my hip a little," she confessed. "But that's nothing. We might have been dreadfully hurt."

"Indeed, yes," Hugh returned earnestly. "It was a very near thing. I hope you won't feel any the worse for it." He pulled out his watch. "I'll have to run," he exclaimed.

"Oh, Miss Campbell," two of the ushers burst in. "We've been looking everywhere for you. We thought you must have been badly hurt. Wasn't it simply awful! Why, when I saw——"

Hugh had to cut across their expletives and say goodbye to Miriam. The girls drew back a little when they

saw his endeavour, but there was no chance for more than a hurried handshake. Then he had run down the step and away, and Miriam had no mind to satisfy their gushing enquiries, nor respond to their compliments over her handsome friend.

CHAPTER XXV: BAD NEWS ILL-BROUGHT

"Though it be honest it is never good
To bring bad news."
—*Antony and Cleopatra,* Act II, Sc. 5

They were preparing for the garden party in connection with the closing of the Ottawa Ladies' College. Pauline hovered anxiously over her own reflection. One had to spend more time "titivating" as the years passed.

"What are you wearing?" she said, peering keenly at her sister's preparations. "Your new silk? Well, so shall I. Might as well look one's best. You won't know many, will you? You've been away for two years now."

Mrs. Campbell joined the girls at that moment. She gave a swift survey of Miriam. "You look quite smart," was her pronouncement. There is likely to be a vacancy on the staff of this college. I imagine you might stand a good chance. Talk brightly with any one you meet connected with the institution. And see, Miriam, you had better put on a string of beads."

Miriam was secretly amused at the idea of a bright smile and a string of beads procuring her an appointment to the staff. Nevertheless, she adorned her neck, hoping that the smile might occur to her later. Privately she was not anxious for the appointment. She had lost her heart to the grey old city by the sea, she loved her life of independence there, and looked forward to returning in the Fall.

But she smiled her brightest and looked her prettiest and succeeded, to her mother's gratification, in evoking quite a bit of attention. They were talking to one of

the teachers under a spreading maple tree, where the orchestra was discoursing sweet music.

"You have had a long journey up, Miss Miriam. Do you know we have people here this afternoon from all over Canada? Why, your cousin was asking for you—Mr. Boulding—just a minute ago. He's all the way from Regina, as you know."

"Fyfe here?" Mrs. Campbell said swiftly. "Oh, he'll find us out. I shall not worry."

"I've heard great stories of that young man," the teacher continued, impressively. "Some one told me he had just put through a big deal in real estate which netted him considerable money. That's the place to make your footing."

Mrs. Campbell's interest quickened at the mention of financial prosperity.

The young teacher was encouraged to continue. "He's talking University to all the girls," she laughed, "and no other will do but Queen's. That's where he went himself and you know how clannish——" she stopped abruptly, remembering Miriam.

Miriam laughed good-naturedly. She was not at all offended. Her sojourn among Dalhousians had toned down the intense college spirit that marked all the children of her Alma Mater. She had come to recognise and enjoy the larger fraternity of university graduates the Dominion over.

"Yes, I know," she said smilingly. "I wonder where Fyfe is? Isn't he the wandering Jew! He pops up everywhere. You never know where next you may see him." A curiosity to meet him beset her.

Fyfe had seen her. With schoolgirls hanging on his arms and crowding him with attentions he managed to move in Miriam's direction. A moment later they were shaking hands.

Ordinarily Mrs. Campbell did not enjoy these sudden appearances. But large deals in real estate had a mollifying effect upon her manners. "Call in and see the girls," she said.

"So you're a real Westerner," Miriam began, all unwitting.

"I am indeed. Back to the original. By the way, that was an unfortunate business about young Stewart, wasn't it?"

Miriam looked absolutely and hopelessly mystified.

"Hugh Stewart, from Nova Scotia," Fyfe supplemented to jog her memory. "Didn't you hear about it? He's out in Regina, you know, in our firm."

"Yes, I know," Miriam faltered, crimsoning swiftly. "But what—was it? I never heard."

"Oh, you never heard?" Fyfe apparently had enough grace to give the facts reluctantly. "Why, it was rather a nasty affair. He—it—well, in plain words, there was a shortage of some hundreds of dollars in the money he handled."

"Hugh Stewart!" Pauline piped up, quite excited. "Well, isn't that awful, Miriam! I met him at Cora's, you know. A great, tall fellow from Nova Scotia, handsome in that coarse way, you understand, Mother, black shiny curls and big eyes."

Mrs. Campbell nodded shrewdly. She knew the type.

"What an abominable lie!"

"Miriam! You will have to excuse yourself to your cousin for such language."

"No, indeed, Mother. Fyfe should apologise to me for speaking that way of my friend."

"Oh, I say, Aunt Laura, I understand. Stewart is a friend of Miriam's. I might have remembered, and, 'pon my word I'm unlucky to be the one to bring the news. They handle big money out West. I suppose they trusted

him because of his uncle. It seems he had come back to the office half an hour before he was due, the day the money disappeared, and they found on him a promissory note he had to meet the next day."

Pauline laughed in nervous excitement. A sweet morsel this, to have one of those precious college men so involved!

"It was almost funny, too," Fyfe continued. "But when they went searching him, poking into his clothes and boots and looking at his letters—well, he's Highland Scotch, and his blood got hot and he let out at that detective, and landed him one, straight between the eyes."

Mrs. Campbell's murmur was of horror.

"I pity the detective that Hugh lays his hands on," said Miriam calmly. It was, for her, the only redeeming incident in the whole recital, and she had seized upon it to cover her utter mortification.

"You seem to take delight in this fellow's assault on an officer of the law!"

"Fyfe takes delight in evil tales!"

"Miriam, that is insulting to your cousin!"

"Much Miriam cares!" murmured her sister.

"Mr. Boulding!" cried a voice at his elbow. "Is this where you are? I want you to meet our new teacher of English. She tells me she knows some distinguished friend of yours."

With a brief smile and bow in Mrs. Campbell's direction, she bore Fyfe off toward the residence. "See you later, Aunt Laura!" he called back.

"There!" said Pauline, as soon as they had gone. "There's another friend you've queered with your sharp tongue, Miriam!"

"Well, Pauline, if Fyfe had heard the remarks you have made about him all his life, I imagine there would be another friend queered."

"Probably Pauline has noticed an improvement. Of

course he had his faults as a boy, but he is a likeable and popular young man," Mrs. Campbell said, "and you were certainly very rude to him."

"He's practically the same, a shade more bombastic, perhaps," Miriam returned. "The improvement comes in the real estate, or law business, I suppose."

Mrs. Campbell took no notice of this. It was her fashion to elude all compromising rejoinders. She took another tack. "I was quite surprised to see how vehemently you spoke in behalf of that student. It is not necessary to constitute yourself the champion of every man who passes through your college."

"It would be quite an undertaking, Mother, certainly," the girl answered whimsically. "But I know this Mr. Stewart, personally. His home is on the hill above Aunt Hannah's."

Mrs. Campbell flushed and bit her lip, glancing hastily around. "That's not a fact to be shouted from the housetops, Miriam. These country connections need not be dragged into Ottawa society. And even if you should happen to have known him down there, you were very unwise to offend your own cousin because of him."

"How was it unwise, Mother?" Miriam asked quietly.

"You will find that it is," she said briefly. "And I will tell you further, Miriam, that it does not profit you at all to fly into heroics over any young man who happens to have got into trouble, just because you knew him at college or in the country. He will drag your reputation down with his, be very sure of that. Why, what would your Aunt Victoria, on the very spot, think of your friendship with such a fellow!"

It was on the tip of Miriam's tongue to say, "Perhaps I would drag his reputation up with mine, Mother. Besides I don't care a fig for Aunt Victoria's opinion or Fyfe's either." But instead of giving voice to these re-

bellious assertions she found herself launching out into a little dissertation.

"You know, Mother, I don't feel that way about my reputation. I never think of it. If people follow their best impulses they will have nothing but goodwill from those they care about. And even if it did drag down my reputation I'd stand up for a friend through thick and thin."

High-flown and sermonic as this speech was, it gave some vent to the girl's feelings and showed Mrs. Campbell the divergence, if not the antithesis, of their views. She heard in it an echo of ideas which her husband long ago had tried to impress upon her. Was Miriam to give articulate utterance to her father's smothered ideals?

But she only remarked, "Don't pitch your voice so high, Miriam, or get excited. You're not on the stage. No one is going to wrest your pals from you, I assure you. But I'll tell you for your own good that the sooner you cut loose from a light-fingered fellow, such as that, the better for yourself, not to speak of your family, whose honour seems to concern you very little."

"What is the family's honour anyway, Mother, that must be coddled whatever happens or however your friends may fare? I've heard that ever since I was so high. I'd be true to my friends even if they had made mistakes."

That Miriam should dare to overthrow the family gods, or to question their reality, was as astounding as it was novel and her mother felt secretly taken aback. But it was part of Mrs. Campbell's creed never to appear at a disadvantage and her reply was as cool and her smile as reserved as though Miriam were still the excited schoolgirl.

" 'Had made mistakes,' you say. That is a very mild way of speaking about a common thief."

CHAPTER XXVI: LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN

> "Leave her to Heaven,
> And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
> To prick and sting her."
>
> —*Hamlet,* Act I, Sc. 5.

Elizabeth's fair hair touched Miriam's as they bent over the magazine, reading slowly and breathlessly. They looked up at the same moment and smiled at each other in delight.

"Isn't it beautiful?" Miriam said.

Elizabeth smiled anew. "It's his first attempt for that magazine," she said, with a little touch of pride. "I wanted him to give the verses a prettier title but he liked the Wordsworthian flavour of that, 'Lines Written upon Seeing the River St. Lawrence.'"

"They're splendid. I like the title, too," Miriam rejoined with enthusiasm. "Tom has 'arrived,' hasn't he? Did his brother see this?"

"Why, he brought me the paper," Elizabeth laughed. "Dan knows everything Tom does, almost before it is begun. He has no more idea of metre than Elmer or Claude, but that doesn't matter. He pores over Tom's verses with the greatest delight."

"I must go and see the Dan Rutherfords," Miriam said, with keen interest. She never would forget her Summer as governess.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see Clara popping in this afternoon," Elizabeth commented. "I told her you were coming up for a few days before going back to Halifax. If she could, she would make you a better offer than the

Halifax Ladies' College, and keep you here for the boys."

Miriam laughed out. But the next moment a shade passed over her face. She was thinking that for her the charm of Kingston had forever passed away. The lake in the distance shone blue in the afternoon sun.

"It doesn't matter," she said, "how beautiful the day is or how the water sparkles, I cannot bear the sight of it."

Miriam's glance travelled from her cousin's slight figure, stretched in the hammock, her fair hair showing fairer against the black dress, out across the green slopes to the water. No, the lake was no longer a friend.

"Tom says I should not think of it that way," Elizabeth went on, "for Sedley loved the lake. He used to spend hours on it. He liked to take his books down to the shore and dream over them, watching the water and learning poetry. He should have been a poet himself. He had the music in him and the noble thoughts. If his—his surroundings had been different, I think he would have been."

Miriam felt the old pain surge back into her heart. Was it really possible that she could be in Kingston talking *about* Sedley and not even expecting to hear his deep, vibrant laugh, to see his eyes "light up from behind" with each quick thought that visited him?

"Does it seem to you, Elizabeth," she said, leaning forward, her eyes full of hot tears, "does it seem sometimes as though his death were needless and cruel?"

Elizabeth waited a full moment before replying. There was that throb of pain in her own heart to be stilled first. She must be ready to speak when her faith was surest. Miriam was younger.

"No, dear," she said at length, and though sadness lodged in her eyes, her voice held a note of confidence.

"I don't know that we can say that any catastrophe is useless, or to no purpose. Only it is hard to see what that purpose it."

She rose, and pulled the baby-carriage farther into the sun. Little Caspar was having a long nap. Then she sat down again beside Miriam.

"Do you think, Miriam, that if our dear one's death had made us, you and I, determine to live a true and noble life, like Sedley's own, that you could say it had been useless? And, Miriam, this is what I believe. If it does *not* make us nobler our loss is doubled. For besides his dear self, we lose that grace which his very going might bring to us."

Miriam was crying quietly. The warm tears were running down her cheeks, fast and faster. She could never rise to Elizabeth's lofty height. Elizabeth could fathom mysteries, could gather life's strange lessons, could trace love's faint beginnings in mankind; Elizabeth could see God working in all these circumstances and through men, because her heart was so pure.

A little sigh and stir came from the depths of the carriage and then a hand was seen vigorously pushing back the covers. Baby thought he had better return to consciousness.

"Oh, how lovely!" Miriam exclaimed, her sore heart finding balm at the vision of the big baby boy, lifted out, heavy and warm and wide-eyed, with a fillet of wee damp curls. She must have Caspar on her lap and feed him his bread and milk, and presently Tom came swinging down the street, waving his hat to them all.

"Well, Rebecca," he cried, "glad to see you!"

"Well, Poet Laureate," she returned, "glad to read you."

Then Tom spied the magazine, and his eyes kindled as he reached for it. But Elizabeth had to kiss him twice

first, once for coming home and again for being so clever.

It was just as they were rising from the table, that evening, that they heard the familiar little laugh of Mrs. Dan at the porch steps. A moment more and her effusive greetings were distributed.

"I heard that my girl was here and I came along," she explained, putting out a plump, white hand to draw Miriam to her. "So you're going back to Nova Scotia? There must be some attraction down there."

Miriam thought she had got over that stupid habit of blushing. Surely her experience before those college girls in Halifax would have cured her. But now the vivid colour was creeping up and up until her cheeks went crimson.

Elizabeth hurried to her rescue. "Miriam, indeed!" she said. "Why, Miriam must not think of such a thing until after Pauline is engaged and married and nicely settled down. And as far as we know that's a good long time off yet."

"And you would keep some poor chap in unhappiness until all that was consummated," Tom said, reprovingly. "Really, Elizabeth, for a happy wife and mother, you seem very heartless."

Little Mrs. Dan looked over at Miriam in sudden compassion. "I was awfully sorry when I heard young Stewart had yielded to that strong temptation." Her round eyes were owl-like in their concern. "But as I said to Dan, it might have been one of our lads. Give them the best of care, you don't know how they'll grow up. The young tykes! Here's Elmer joined the Scouts and has a knife so big and sharp it makes me shiver. I don't know why they put instruments like that into boys' hands. I yell 'Look out for the girls' heads!' every time he opens it."

"The girls?" Miriam echoed, remembering only Vivian.

"I didn't know you had another, Mrs. Rutherford."

"Oh, yes," the little woman nodded, "I got this one easy. She's Nellie's baby. Oh, you won't know Nellie. She was my washer-woman's daughter in Meadowville, and used to chore for me or table-wait." She cleared her throat, nervously. Seeing Elizabeth's simplicity of life since that time, learning her absence of pretence or affectation, Mrs. Dan had often felt provoked with herself for all her concern over the bride's visit.

"Poor Nellie, she died with the next one, and the old mother had two others to look out for, so I just brought Pansy home. She'll be good company for Vivian. Pansy isn't her given name. She was Minnie Maude. She's a good little thing; no nasty tricks except holding her breath till she turns black when you don't give in to her."

"How horrible!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "How can you ever break her of that, Clara?"

"Pinching," said Clara succinctly. "Behind the ears!"

They all laughed out at this, Mrs. Dan with the rest. "That's right!" she cried. "You try it on Caspar. Did he get his stomach-teeth through, Elizabeth?" she queried, with vast concern, and nothing would do but she must take a trip to the nursery to see him for herself.

Miriam looked after her plump figure, musingly. "She doesn't exactly blow a fanfare of trumpets, announcing her good deeds, does she?" she said to Tom as the door closed behind them. "Was that the first time you heard about adopting the little girl?"

"Yes," Tom laughed. "I noticed an extra one on the verandah the other day, but I didn't know she was a fixture. Clara makes no more of another baby than I would of a new necktie. It gives her far less concern and a good deal more pleasure."

"I like that kind all right," Miriam said, stretching herself comfortably in the big chair.

Tom nodded. Then turning leisurely, "Well, how is Halifax, Rebecca?"

Miriam, nothing loath, launched out into a recital of its charms, the young professor noticing, as she glowed over the description, how she had added to her own charms during her stay there. The salt air had played around her, the fog had clung to her, the old, steep hills had done their share, and clear eyes, fresh colour, and an erect carriage testified to their good work.

Late that night, as Miriam sat on the edge of her bed braiding her brown hair, her cousin tapped on the door. "I couldn't resist a little talk, Miriam. I was glad 'Mrs. Dan,' came in, for I knew she wanted to meet you again. She simply dotes on you." She dropped down beside Miriam expectantly.

"I should have been more affable then. But she always nettles me. It's silly, though, to mind such trifles when she is capable of really big things."

"You heard they were moving West? To Regina? They'll be seeing Hugh Stewart. She knows his aunt."

"Her old music-teacher, she told me. Well, well! Poor Hugh!" was Miriam's comment. Then thinking her cousin might construe the pity in another way, she turned the subject to one equally unwelcome.

"Miriam!" her cousin exclaimed, a note of bitterness in her voice, "is it possible that you haven't heard? Cora is engaged and will probably be married at Christmas. The year will be up then." She straightened resolutely, answering Miriam's look of pain and disgust. "We have put her out of our thought altogether. We will let her go her own gait. I remember her only to feel proud of what my brother was and did while his life was linked with hers."

She paused a minute, but Miriam's silence seemed no bar to further confidences. Encouraged, she continued,

"I cannot help speaking about something else, dear. How badly I have felt about poor Hugh Stewart! What possessed him to do such a thing? I wouldn't believe it at first, until I heard about the promissory note. It was here, you know, that he owed the money. Tom found out about it. He borrowed it going through college. A great many students have to. But surely he could have got some way to meet it. If Tom had only known! How gladly we would have helped him! Can you throw any light on it, Miriam?"

Miriam shook her head. This was a subject which she preferred not to discuss. "I met him in Halifax, you know," she said slowly. "I had not seen him since that Christmas, last Christmas, and before that we had not spoken for months. That was his fault. But I forgave Hugh everything. He was so wonderfully kind. We exchanged one or two letters last winter. Then his stopped. There are two of mine he hasn't answered yet."

"He was such a splendid fellow," Elizabeth commented, "that I cannot bear to think of him in disgrace."

And could Miriam? But neither could she bear to speak of it. She was fighting against a decision which all her friends had come to, and for which there seemed to be such conclusive evidence. Not even to Elizabeth could she say how deep her hurt was, nor how this occurrence had revealed to her her own heart's feeling.

CHAPTER XXVII: EVIL MADE BETTER

"O benefit of ill! Now I find true,
That better is by evil still made better."

—*Sonnet* CXIX.

DECEPTIVE was the flood of sunlight, bathing the city's streets. The snow lay dry and flaky beneath its hot breath, the mercury had quietly slipped out of sight. Countless millions of diamond points scintillated in the still air. The atmosphere was a-quiver with icy particles, the dance of the sunbeams with the frost-fairies.

Wide and quiet and winter-bound lay the city, dead-white below, domed with a matchless blue. Across this sky-line the white and red brick buildings set up their fine proportions, bulwarks against the sweep of Nature. The broad paved streets pointed the highways of civilization. But beyond this congregation, East, West, North and South, limitless, lonely, grand, stretched the white prairies.

In the centre of the city and despite the majestic sway of the Frost King, life was eager and intense. The snow crumbled under the feet of men who held the keys of the country's future. Pioneers from the centres of learning and of commerce, where history was established, and destiny fixed, were here to have a hand in nation building. Roaring in from the four quarters of the continent, the great trains brought their quota of settlers, fain to share in the general prosperity, and the hotels were crowded with those of every kindred and tribe and tongue and nation.

But the spirit was one of good cheer. A land, sun-

shine-steeped, puts gladness into the heart. Keen, dry air makes the step elastic; rich reward for careful toil lends confidence to a people. And the citizens of this Western metropolis moved with an air of buoyancy and aggression. This was a young land and they were young with it, a land of promise which it was theirs to share. Let older centres look to their laurels.

It was a Saturday afternoon in late November and Regina was at its busiest. In the downtown regions, where traffic was thickest, the city presented a most interesting sight. Typically Western were the groups of young men hurrying past in the frosty air, Western those teams of shaggy horses, Western too those vacant lots in the centre of the city, held by ambitious real estate men. Western those cottages, nestling against fine brick buildings, substantial frame houses on the outskirts hobnobbing with a few genuine shacks.

To Hugh Stewart, striding through Victoria Park, in the frosty afternoon sunlight, these sights had grown familiar, and his thoughts were too engrossing to allow the claim of outside interests. He walked briskly, as one who would rather be alone, with the sights and sounds of the city left far behind.

He was glad of the vastness of the prairies, glad of the sense of infinity which they brought to him. Life was so cabined, so baffling, so circumscribed. It was good to feel that beyond it all there was endless freedom, which the prairies typified, and an overshadowing presence like the sky above the plains.

It had been a bitter season for Hugh Stewart. It was bitter still, a crucifixion to his fine sense of justice and of rectitude. Through all his work, through all his attempts at relaxation and recreation, there went still this haunting suspicion. It crippled his best efforts at work, and despite his fixed endeavour set its insidious mark on

his features. The nervous tension had supplanted his frank expression with one of strain. In his eyes the care-free glance of youth was overshadowed. The indefiniteness of the conjecture and the absence of a specific charge made it all the more difficult for Hugh to defend himself. He passed in and out with the stamp of popular disgrace upon him, but with the inward, brave assurance that time would reveal and truth would vindicate, and that he must submit to the sharp discipline of patience.

What made the trial doubly hard was his loneliness, which was emphasised all the more since his friendship with Miriam Campbell had been broken. Slowly there was dawning on Hugh's soul the consciousness of his insufficiency, the inadequacy of his personal life, the need for some other to complement, to fill up that which was lacking. It was that primeval thing, the welling-up of affection, the call for some object to love. And its dawning had been slow because in Hugh's nature no sudden changes could take place. His affections, no less than his mental gifts, needed time for development. His was a nature whose powers would be actualised years after his contemporaries had attained, and what was true of his mental gifts was true of his affections. His was not the ardent nature which finds easy vent for its pent-up stores. His reserve was Highland, but his fund of affection was his own, and it needed not only the loneliness of the prairies, but the isolation of trial and suspense, to reveal to himself the need of his heart.

And always before his mind in those moments when his solitariness pressed hardest, came the picture of a girl's smooth, brown head, the quiet look of her eyes, the quick flush on her face. He saw her in Cape Breton's rugged setting, her gingham frock and white shoes moving brightly along the wooded roads or up through the fields of waving grain. He saw her, later, in college

gown, walking, always quickly, through the halls, books bulging out from under her arms, ink-smudges on her fingers, an eager, earnest, engrossed expression in her eyes. He saw her, a graduate now, across the crowded church, her scarlet tartan luring. But his mind dwelt longest on the last picture. The afternoon sky, tender green foliage behind, and Miriam leaning back against the cushions, trailing her fingers in the rippling water, as the waves gurgled against the side of the boat.

It was tempting to dwell upon these visions of bygone days, but Hugh resolutely shut them away. They would only be visions to him and memories, and the girl with them. Their paths would diverge, from this time, more and more. While this cloud overshadowed his sky he could not allow himself such dreams. Would it ever lift? Hugh's faith was strong, but at times he felt the hopelessness of it all. There was no one else on whom to lay the blame, no one else through whose hands the money had passed. He had talked the matter over with young Boulding, his companion in the law office, time and again. They could see no light at all. Hugh had been kept at the office. But that was as nothing compared with the shadow of suspicion under which the young man daily walked, or with the unrest in his own mind.

Fyfe had urged him to forget it all. "It's one of those inexplicable things that are always bobbing up," he said. "Every one else is living it down. Surely you ought to." And for Miriam's cousin's sake, he had tried. Of course she would have heard all the particulars. That was why he could not answer her letters. His sensitive, proud nature quivered with the shame of the accusation, the despair of vindication. His best powers had been bent on discovering the culprit. He had conceived a daring solution which he confided to the de-

tectives, but apparently in vain. He felt at times like disappearing altogether from the scene. But this would be a cowardly subscribing to the suspicions. For the sake of his uncle and the many friends in the city who wanted to believe only good of him, Hugh kept his grip of things, and mingled as best he could in all the stirring life about him.

To-night he was to go to his uncle's for dinner. Had there been any valid excuse under the heavens for declining the invitation, Hugh would have seized on it. For he knew he was to meet there Miriam's mother, Mrs. Roderick Campbell of Ottawa, who was visiting her sister, Mrs. Boulding. Hugh's anticipations as he strode along the snowy streets were not of the pleasantest.

He pulled out his watch. Starting at the lateness of the hour, he swung on his heel, and made off down a side street. He would just have time to change for dinner. What a glorious evening it was! After all, one must not lose heart. Truth was bound to be revealed. Youth and health and a free conscience were his, meantime.

And this conviction carried him on, swift-striding up the long, snowy street on which the early Winter night had already fallen. The moon was high, and made a diamond point of every snowflake. The creak of the snow and the keenness of the air which cut against his throat would have testified to the coldness of the night even apart from tingling finger-tips. But as though to set the sign and seal of Winter's thralldom over all, there, as he reached the long avenue, the curtain of Northern lights unrolled and furled, furled and unrolled, in splendid convolutions, across the deep blue sky. It swamped from household windows, swinging from street-posts the stars and shamed the little lights of men, peeping above and twinkling from out the myriad eyes of the

Parliament building far across the frozen lake. Hugh stood a moment, riveting each detail of the scene, and then, wheeling about, walked up the steps of Judge Stewart's imposing home.

A far cry, this, from Tom Angus Stewart's white farm house on the hill; from the hooked mats to the Persian rugs; from the *maragan* (puddings) to the turkey even now scenting the gale as the door is flung wide. But the greetings, oh, they have the old-time flavour! If Robbie Burns asked nothing better of Heaven than a Highland welcome at the gate, these Scottish folk had a fashion of bringing Heaven very near, when one of their own clan was seen without the door.

"Come in! Come in, Hugh, my boy!" How the warmth of the greeting coursed like wine through the young man's veins, how it toned up his sore heart and nerved him anew! "It's a frosty night," the Judge continued, his keen, dark eyes the prototype of his nephew's, as Hugh slipped out of his topcoat. "The mercury is playing around 35° or 40° below, by our thermometer."

"Yes, it's sharp. I was afraid I was late," the younger Hugh rejoined, as his uncle led the way to the drawing-room. "I was over at the 'Y' for some exercise."

"That's right. Doesn't do to get stiff. My old remedy for that was the buck-saw."

Hugh gave a quick laugh which was checked the next instant. Just inside the door was standing Miriam's mother.

The amazement which had dawned in Mrs. Roderick Campbell's eyes at the mention of the buck-saw from no less a personage than Judge Stewart, narrowed into animosity, as, for the first time, they encountered this young man whose cause her Miriam had championed.

"My nephew, Hugh Stewart, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs.

Boulding. Perhaps you have met Fyfe's mother? You know Fyfe, here, in any case."

This question saved Mrs. Campbell the necessity of words. And she could make her survey of the crisp, curly head, straight features and tall well-knit figure, while her sister put her pointed questions.

"You are still with the law firm?" Mrs. Boulding was asking, with intentional surprise.

"Yes. Why not?" Hugh returned, swiftly.

"Oh, certainly if they—if you enjoy it." The steady glance from the young man's dark eyes was disconcerting. "I thought from what Fyfe said that you would be leaving."

"What did he say?" Hugh demanded, his glance following that young man to the end of the room.

"Really, I cannot remember the exact words. Something to the effect that you did not find the atmosphere of the office very—shall I say congenial or comfortable."

"He's quite right in that."

Mrs. Boulding looked at him sharply.

"But, should I go, that would not make matters right."

Before she had time to sort out her reply their hostess appeared. "Why, my dear boy, I was afraid that you were going to disappoint us." His aunt's musical voice greeted him at the dining-room. But that face with the round, wise eyes just beyond her? Surely he did not need the introduction to Mrs. D. Webster Rutherford? "I am going to put you beside Mrs. Rutherford, Hughie," his aunt continued. "She is one of my old pupils, so be your very nicest to her."

A beaming smile met his embarrassed one. The eyes turned upon him were owl-like in their regard. The innocent question, "How are you keeping, Mr. Stewart?" might read, *interlinear,* "Are you feeling badly about this missing money which every one thinks you have

stolen?" But Hugh was not one to read between the lines and answered only the solicitude of her query.

Then, "You moved West?" he said in his turn. All Ontario seemed to be coming out here, getting the news and sending it East. "We'll have to get the Tom Rutherfords out next."

"I guess there are a good many people you'd like to be coaxing," she hinted. Then, as if on a happy coincidence, and leaning across the table, "Why, you're Miriam Campbell's mother, aren't you? Miriam Campbell of Queen's?" She pressed the question, ignoring the incident of the Sunday supper. "You're so fleshy I'd hardly know you."

Mrs. Campbell waited a moment. She needed time to regain her poise. *Fleshy!* Finally, "I have a daughter, Miriam," she conceded.

"Of Queen's?" Mrs. D. Webster was flushed with the set-back, but still determined.

"Of Ottawa. Our home is *there.*"

"But Miriam went through Queen's,'" was the persistent reply.

"Do you mean Queen's University? Yes, she is a graduate." Mrs. Campbell had no intention of living on the reputation of her daughter's college course, nor waxing enthusiastic over any stray acquaintances that Miriam in her misguided ardour had picked up; least of all this insignificant connection of "poor Elizabeth's" whom she remembered perfectly.

But the other, nothing daunted, finished her explanation: "Hugh Stewart and I were just speaking of Miriam. She taught our boys, you know. Sort of governess-tutor. Great letter-writer, too."

Mrs. Campbell's face hardened. The episode of the garden party the preceding Summer, the disclosures, Miriam's heat, her own warnings, flocked back to her.

She moistened and adjusted her lips in that small, quiet way that her intimates recognised.

"Yes, I have heard Mr. Stewart's name mentioned before this," she said evenly. "Friends of ours from the West were speaking about him." Nor did she even glance in Fyfe's direction as she spoke.

Hugh's cheeks showed a dull, red glow. He knew that she was slashing at him, but he was defenceless before this guest in his uncle's home.

"Oh, I say, Aunt Laura, don't trot out old ghosts! Out here we live in the future." Fyfe, busy over his plate, shot quick glances from his Aunt to Hugh.

"Very well, then, we will live in the future," Mrs. Campbell rejoined, with a dangerous smile. "These college acquaintances need not be projected into one's social life, I suppose." She turned to address some remark to Judge Stewart as if having done with Hugh and Mrs. Dan.

"The social life of some people might be redeemed by a touch of the academic," Hugh had it on the tip of his tongue to say, but happily he took so long pondering the speech that he never delivered it.

Seeing hints of distress on his aunt's face and remembering her injunction to be nice," he turned resolutely to his companion.

"How are the boys?" he asked, with happy inspiration, recalling Miriam's tales. "Do they like the prairies?"

Mrs. Dan laughed delightedly at the broaching of her favourite topic. "They're making the best of it. It worried them at first that they could never sit on the ground and let their legs hang down, but they coast down cellar now and enjoy it all right. Oh, of course I mean dug cellars snowed over."

"Don't you make sport of our prairies, Mrs. Rutherford," Judge Stewart called to her from the end of the

table. "Not to speak of their beauty, they turn in big money."

"Well, we're here to take our share of it," was her saucy retort.

"That's all right. The trouble is that some people take more than their share," her host returned, referring to wheat speculation.

"Unfortunately, yes." Mrs. Boulding's even tones dominated the silence.

"And they get away with it, too," Fyfe laughed lightly, applying himself to his dinner.

"But justice always finds them," Mrs. Campbell declared, looking swiftly at Hugh Stewart.

"That's sure!" said Hugh.

A ring at the bell, a rustle through the hall, quick words exchanged, hurrying footsteps, and then—the message seemed to hiss its sibilant way through Hugh's ears like a trumpet call—"Mr. Fyfe Boulding is wanted!"

"Can't they wait a few minutes? We have nearly finished dinner."

"No, they say not."

"Oh, it's probably the Major," Fyfe exclaimed, springing up. "You'll excuse me, Mrs. Stewart? He won't keep me long."

Long? Longer, perhaps, than you may care to wait!

There were low, hurried tones in the hall, the sound of expostulation and persistence in the voices. It was not the officer Fyfe had expected. This was an officer of the law.

"Will you come to the hall, Judge?"

"What can it mean?"

"Some little scrape Fyfe has got into, perhaps. What is it, Judge?"

"Mrs. Boulding, I am sorry to be the bearer of evil tidings, and in my own home."

"What? Audacious! *My* son? The blackguards!"

"Hush, Mrs. Boulding, the officer is still there. They have surely made a mistake. My husband will investigate. They must be wrong!"

"I'm sorry that he's your son, Mrs. Boulding, and your nephew, Mrs. Campbell, but I'm glad the thief is caught, whatever!"

"The thief!" She turned on Hugh. "How dare you call him so? Nothing has been proved. They are trying to incriminate the innocent! What is that? They are not taking him away! Fyfe!"

"I am sorry it has had to come to this, Victoria."

"Mrs. Boulding, Mrs. Campbell, I feel deeply for you both, and regret exceedingly that this should have happened at my house. But God knows what this boy has endured these last months, and whoever has allowed him to suffer unjustly deserves the full penalty of the law."

CHAPTER XXVIII: ENSKIED AND SAINTED

"I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted."
—*Measure for Measure,* Act I, Sc. 5.

Fyfe Boulding's case was quickly disposed of. The detectives had done their work well. It was evident that Fyfe had traded on his relationship to Miriam to disarm suspicion from Hugh's side, and had taken advantage of his propinquity to Hugh's desk to filch the large envelope from his pile of mail. His high living furnished an adequate explanation for his need of funds and his father did not feel disposed to settle disguised gambling debts. Fyfe's short cut to payment led him by way of the penitentiary.

Hugh told himself that he should be sorry. He did lament the foolishness, the utter stupidity of the fellow in thinking to "get away" with such a performance. Wasn't a rogue caught, sooner or later? It was playing a losing game to play with fire. He had pretty well seen this whole affair in his mind, worked out to a finish. He must have had a bit of the detective about him. But Fyfe was so foolish, so shortsighted. His whole connection was, too, with one little exception.

It made him angry, too, as it would any honourable man, to think that Fyfe had let him bear the blame and wear the stigma all these wretched months. But oh, what a load was taken from his shoulders! They were beginning to sag, he could square them again. His head had been drooping, he could lift it now, hold it high. His eyes had been lowered, now he could look the world in the face. Never from sense of guilt, never from shame or dishonour had he been so downcast, but that others could

credit him, Hugh Stewart, with such a crime, that others could believe it possible that he was otherwise than straightforward, honest, true, the very thought of this had bowed him down, had weighed upon him.

And all through the long Winter, that Winter of storms and cold and rigour such as he had never experienced, that long, busy, happy, snow-bound Winter, he would wonder about Miriam, far down by the sounding sea, in that old grey city facing the Atlantic. Did she know? Did she know everything? Had she been glad it was Fyfe, even though her own cousin, instead of himself, Hugh?

And presently the Winter was passed. And Spring, the dancing psaltress, came tripping across the prairies, her garments perfumed with the sweet smell of the good brown earth, her arms full of pale purple anemones, her eyes deep wells of azure. She sent a leaping life into the ground, she shot thrills of rapture into the bird-notes, and stirred strange pulses in the lives of the young. There was a new birth in every sunrise, a passion in the noonday, a trembling of love in the tender colours of the sunset. The desire for kinship, the outgiving instincts were rife. It was the time of expression, self-communication, union.

Out alone on the wide stretch of the prairies, under the April sky, with the stillness of evening about him, the limitless majesty of the heavens unrolled above his head, the myriad buds looking up with their sweet flower faces out of the rough, prairie sod, "where the quiet-coloured end of the evening smiles, miles and miles," Hugh yielded his heart with its great store of pent-up affection. All the torrent of his strong nature burst out. He loved, he loved, he loved infinitely. Whatever happened, whatever she might make of it, he loved her. Exultantly, throbbingly, his heart proclaimed the wonderful fact, ever old,

ever strangely, beautifully new. He had thought that the loneliness had been responsible, he had been inclined to explain this transformation by his sudden, joyous release from the black weight of suspicion. But now at last, he knew the reason, he understood the mystery. The prairies had done it, the sunset had done it, the whole wide earth and sky was in the secret. Yet it was his, and his to tell to her alone. Sometime, somewhere, his to tell.

CHAPTER XXIX: THEREFORE TO BE WOO'D

"She's beautiful and therefore to be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore to be won."
—*King Henry VI,* PART I, ACT V, SC. 3.

"BE careful now, *Eudal!* (my dear). See that you'll not crush it! Wait you, *mo graidheag* (my darling), till I will be putting in some more tissue paper. There now, that's the way. It will not do to be spoiling it till it gets to the pic-a-nic."

"Your cake will take the prize, Aunt Hannah. Yes it will, you'll see. I don't believe there'll be as good a one on all the tables."

"Oh, indeed, there'll be some fine cakes there, Miriam. Not but what mine is all right, with the good butter and eggs and cream. I'll not be putting frosting to fill up the holes like Sarah Lauchy MacDonald. But that was the queer cake altogether. John bought it last year at the auction. They were after having too many cakes and they sold them to be making some money. Well, poor Sarah had hers all fixed up fine with the decorations and it looked great. But when we would be cutting it, it was that full of sugar, soaked in, that you couldn't tell but what it was made of frosting. Well, the poor thing! But what was she sending a cake at all if she could not make it right, the fool! And all trimmed up with leaves and little candies!"

Miriam laughed out at the description. She would have laughed at anything, that perfect summer morning. But the holidaying spirit was infectious and she skipped instead of walking, dancing along between the house and barn as though her heels were winged.

"I feel like my namesake," she told her Uncle John, coming up beside him as he was oiling the buggy for the drive to the picnic-grounds. "I could dance before the Lord. Mornings like this are meant for skipping and dancing."

John Campbell set the oil can down on the grass and pushed back the wheel. "You'll have dancing enough before sunset. Whether it will be before the Lord, I'm after doubting. Little Farquhar has his fiddle ready. He just went up the road a while ago, and Alan Stewart will be playing the pipes."

As he spoke the wail of that plaintive instrument came groaning and shrieking over the hill. Miriam distinguished the notes of the "Cock O' the North," by following the main theme and steadily ignoring the screams and grunts that were interjected. She saw the waving tartan ribbons streaming out from behind that many-legged object in Alan's arms, as his buggy appeared on the crest of the hill.

It was all aboard for the Campbell family now, and Miriam, perched perilously on one knee of her uncle's and one of her aunt's, drove the mare down to the gate and fell in with the line of carriages.

Her uncle glanced around curiously. "There's Tom Angus Stewart with the light carriage," he said. "He'll be going to Whycocomagh. He's got the collar with him to be mended. Stop up, Miriam *eudal* (dear), till I ask him if he'll not be staying for the pic-a-nic."

"Whoa-a!" Miriam commanded.

"Fine day!" said her uncle, leaning over the back of the seat.

"Oh, well, yes, pretty fine," Tom Angus Stewart agreed.

"You'll not be going far?"

"I've got to go to Orangedale," the other man re-

turned. "Hughie'll be coming from the West to-day," he added casually.

Miriam's hands, holding the lines, gave such a sudden jerk that the mare started briskly down the hill. Her aunt expostulated. "You're in an awful hurry, then, Miriam. Why could you not wait a minute till I would be asking after Mary Dolena? The poor thing is home from Boston with her baby. Her mother will be having her hands full with all the strangers."

They were one of a long line of carriages which wound down from the hill to the sandy drive by the cove, over the bridge, and up the wooded slopes. From far off in the distance came the sound of the *piob mhor* (bagpipes), and as they neared the picnic grounds the twang of little Farquhar's fiddle sounded more and more distinct. The sweet smell of the summer morning was gently wafted towards them, and the dimpled waves of the lake laughed a welcome as they passed.

Here were the picnic-grounds. The horses were unhitched and grazing in a neighbouring field. A crowd of youths and men were ambling about the gate, saluting each new carriageful with jocular remarks. Inside, the women were depositing huge baskets of provisions beside the long tables. Two dancing-platforms, roofed with boughs of spruce, were set temptingly at one side.

Miriam sprang down and helped her aunt out with the viands. She was shyly accosted by some of the young people who felt embarrassed in the presence of a college girl and teacher in Halifax. But the festive spirit of the morning soon dispelled any thought of formality and Miriam was presently the centre of a laughing group, entertaining them with tales of "Nickie" and the Minerva fracas.

She was just at the climax of her recital and a laugh was running around the circle, when into the middle of

the crowd came a light carriage, with Tom Angus Stewart and another, younger man. They drew up sharply right beside Miriam. Over the wheel Hugh Stewart sprang, dropping lightly to the ground.

Something leaped to her throat as she saw him. Would they notice her colour? He looked so big and brown, and so alive. His hand when he shook hers was strong and warm.

"How are you?" he said, and Miriam told him that she was very well, indeed. A whisper ran around the circle to the effect that this was Tom Angus Stewart's Hughie from the Nor' West, and every one regarded him with interest and pride. Hugh had driven over from Orangedale with "the mail," on purpose to be in time for the picnic, and he went into it with such heart and soul that even the old women, the most captious of critics, forgot themselves utterly in compliment. "Well, but, *Eudal* (Dearie), the broad shoulders of him, and the purty, purty face of him!"

Late in the afternoon Miriam found a cool spot under a tree from which she could watch the games. Her aunt and some of the older women were around her, and their Gaelic interjections and bursts of astonishment began to grow wearisome to her untutored ears. How foreign her Aunt Hannah seemed at times like these! How lonely that strange speech could make one feel! What a long picnic it had been! And there they were, all those young people, stepping it out bravely to the screech of the bagpipes under the roof of spruce.

"And will you not be dancing, at all, at all?" said a voice at her elbow. Miriam started at the sound. It was Alan, Hughie's older brother, a broad smile on his tanned face.

Something dauntless charged through the girl's pulses. She would not sit there moping. Up she sprang and off

she stepped with Alan, all gaiety and life. Her aunt, looking after her, whispered in doubtful compliment, "Oh, well, poor thing, she will be looking like her father, dear Roderick, and he was the poor, thin stick when he will be young." To which disparaging description of Miriam's figure another crony of Hannah Campbell's remarked by way of consolation, "Oh, wait you, *Eudal* (Dearie), she will be after getting fat and red with the good cream." Beauty being measured by rounded, rosy cheeks, Miriam's slight figure and rather pale face were objects of commiseration.

Alan, however, disregarded these deficiencies. Miriam and he made the round of the picnic field and brought up finally by the lemonade booth. To Alan's embarrassment there was Hughie, no less, with a group of girls, indulging in a long refreshing drink. He had just succeeded in putting Lauchy MacDonald's two sons to utter rout on the field of sport, and the caber, on the ground beside him, was resting from its labours.

After that, Alan never knew exactly how it happened, but he lost Miriam. He had picked up the caber to test its weight, and the first thing he saw they were moving together down towards the gate, and passing out into the road. And then, behold, Hughie was helping her into the buggy, and away they drove, down the long road.

"I couldn't get to talk to you, there, with all the crowd." He stretched his arm across and tucked the duster over her knees. "Are you comfortable?" he said in his quick, full voice. It sounded exactly as though he had said, "Are you comfortable, *Dear?*" But surely he would never dare!

"Just perfectly!" she told him, but she kept gazing straight out at the shining vista.

"Won't you let me get a good look at you?" he suggested, and for a fluttering second she showed him her

clear eyes. Were they tell-tales? She couldn't trust them. Down came the lids and away she turned. Then —what was the murmur? He bent his head nearer to catch it. "I never believed any evil tales about you, Hugh."

"Didn't you, dear?" He had said it this time. But then, it was almost a Gaelic idiom, a Gaelic weakness anyway, this,—well, this affectionate way of speaking. She need not think anything of it.— "Well I thank you, then, from the bottom of my heart," he concluded simply. "If I had known that, it would have helped me to endure it all with better courage."

Another half-mile was covered in silence. What did they need of words? Was there not the language of the lake, the rippling lake, beside them all the way, the tone of the Summer breezes through the green leaves, bird notes, buoyant and brief, whispering sigh of the trees?

"I'm afraid I was not as generous as you," he confessed, the words coming with some difficulty.

Her startled glance embarrassed him. How? it questioned. How indeed? He must go through with it now. But what to tell her?

"I was believing some stories they were telling about you." He had almost added "whatever," as he always did when very much moved.

"Some stories?" said Miriam. *"About me?"* If she had been accused of murder she could not have been more thunderstruck.

Then he spread before her the whole baseless fabric of Cora's gossip, with his blundering acceptance and the miserable break in their friendship. Miriam herself supplied the colouring. Well she knew Cora's wiles! Given a fit subject what could she not weave with her unscrupulous skill? And he had believed it all. Then that explained. Oh, yes, she saw the whole thing now. And

to Hugh's amazement and relief, she laughed, a little wavering, uncertain laugh, at the picture of a Miriam who was bold, and would flirt and deceive—a veritable Pauline version of a Miriam.

"It's all right," she told him. "I'm not surprised at your believing those stories. She does do startling things, that Isabel Margaret Miriam Campbell. Do you know, I heard that she went out buggy-riding with a strange young man!"

Scotchmen are not always so slow as they are pictured. Hugh could drive the most spirited horse with one hand just as easily as with two. He could also carry out a joke as well as the next one, once launched on it. How slim and dainty she was beside him! How absolutely deserted was the road! Tremors assailed him, delightful heats and shivers. But his voice, when he spoke, though low was as cool and even as the distant surface of the lake. "And *I* heard, moreover, that he—had—his—arm—around—her!"

Then he jumped as if shot. "Chursty" was watching it all from the side of the road.

CHAPTER XXX: THE VOICE OF HARMONY

"And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes Heaven drowsy with the harmony."
—*Love's Labour's Lost,* Act IV, Sc. 3.

That night, as Miriam sat combing her hair in the quiet front bedroom, the lamp making strange shadows on the white walls and ceiling, her thoughts went back to that afternoon's drive by the wave-lapped shore. Letting the comb fall from her hand, she bent forward, in the strange delight of this new indulgence. Was it coming to her, this throbbing joy, this high sweet pain? Was she to know at last what she had always dreamed of knowing some kind day? Was this what she had felt that afternoon, sitting so close to him, they alone, driving right into the heart of that golden light? She trembled with a sudden awe, and drew her arms together in a long, shuddering sigh of content. It was coming. Her heart rushed to meet it.

Blowing out the lamp, she crept to the window and sat there in the starlight. White and still and shadowy lay the homes beyond, as though the night invested them with mystery. Softly, oh, so softly, the little waves met the shore and murmured in retreating. Were they whispering tender messages in the darkness? Sweet came the breeze against her face. Was it touching his, at the house on the hill?

Up the long field, yellow in the fresh morning sunshine, moved the old mowing-machine, felling the hay. High on the seat, his head bare, his lithe body swaying with the stride of the horses, sat Hugh, revelling in all the sweet sights and sounds of the country. Never had his home seemed so attractive. Never had a field of tim-

othy and clover looked so inviting. Never had there been such plenitude of loveliness. He had cast off all responsibility for the time being, and work in the open was a real holiday. The thought of the Far West gave an added zest to his pleasure. Yet in that very thought was there a tinge of gravity. For, although the burden of its big problems, with which eventually he must grapple, did not as yet lie on his young heart, he felt the seriousness of the life to be lived by all worthy citizens of that great new country whose concern it would be to intelligently cope with the incoming multitudes, to merge diverse elements and fuse conflicting ideals into a virile and progressive national life, to frame such laws and maintain such social and political standards as would make the dominant moral tone high and fundamental.

Up the long path from the barn came an old woman in calico gown, her bare feet hidden by the hay, a large bandanna handkerchief tied over her head. Hugh, sitting in the shade of the mountain ash, at the side of the field, while Alan took his turn at mowing, spied her a good distance off. She came to a stop beside him and sat down heavily on a large stone, talking all the time, half to herself and half to the tree and the fields.

"Well, Chursty," he began, "and how are you?"

Oh, she was keeping very well, then, indeed, darling, she told him, and it was the clever boy he was, himself, to be after growing so big and fine-looking, and the smart lawyer up in the Nor' West and to be giving Alan a hand with the hay. And she had seen him after the pic-a-nic, then, driving with that thin girl, John Campbell's niece. And did Hughie know where the girl would be this morning?

Hugh felt a dull flush rise in his cheeks under the scrutiny of those sharp, old eyes. No, he did not know. Was it Miriam Campbell?

O si, Eudal (Oh yes, Dear), it was Miriam Campbell she was meaning. A smart girl, Miriam, who had put out the awful fire on her once when she would be having the pipe in her pocket with all the good tobacco that the Judge had brought her.

Hugh moved uneasily. This was a plain hint. Well, where was Miriam then, he asked, with some curiosity.

Chursty Ian Bhain (Christy, daughter of John the Fair), beckoned him mysteriously to follow her. She led him by a side path back of the barn to a spot overlooking Trout Brook, and John Campbell's farm.

There was the long road winding in by the bridge, with Lauchy MacDonald's little red store just before it. Inland the brook stretched through evergreen thickets and clumps of alder bushes, shading the deep still pools. On either side of the pebbly stream, which widened at places into little ponds, or narrowed into tortuous rivulets, stretched great meadows of low-lying, marshy ground, attractive but treacherous.

Chursty pointed with one brown, trembling finger to where, away down on the right, a figure in white was carefully fording the narrow stream.

Hugh uttered a sharp interjection and, shouting to Alan to watch the horses, started off at a quick pace. It was Miriam, without doubt, wading across Trout Brook, quite unaware of her danger.

Down the road he ran, his breath coming quickly, partly from apprehension, and partly at the prospect of meeting her and bringing her to safety.

But all unconscious of her approaching fate, Miriam with necklace of slippers and stockings, was gingerly stepping from stone to stone, carefully holding her skirts from the water, and trying to keep her balance on those slippery boulders. Up here the brook was divided and the water tumbled down like a small cataract, icy-cold.

If she should slip now, she would get a nasty wetting and she was off so far from every one. A faint hullo came sounding over from the direction of the bridge. But she could see no one. She picked her way on, swaying and steadying herself, until, quite exhausted, she dropped on the muddy bank.

The sun was hot here. It would be better to go and sit under one of those big bushes. Dragging on stockings and slippers she stepped out and into the tall grass. What mud! Her thin slippers stuck in it. On she struggled, dragging one foot after another, each weighted heavily, the water oozing out of her slippers as she stepped. It was getting worse and worse. She could never reach the bridge this way.

A sudden whirr-r and flap, flap of great wings beside her, startled the girl almost to terror, as a large, grey crane, roused from its native seclusion, winged its way up from the marshy hollow, its long legs drooping behind, its feathery pinions beating the air. Frightened at the sudden apparition, she took a hasty plunge forward, and before she thought what she was doing she slipped and slid deep into the mire of a great bog.

Her cry of distress was echoed by a shout from some one, in a boat, gliding between the alder bushes on the bank. And then her name was spoken by a voice that sent the blood leaping and thumping to her cheeks.

"Where are you, Miriam?" he called.

"Oh, Hugh, come! I need you!" For, with each effort to gain a foothold, she found herself sliding farther into trouble.

It took him but a moment to push the boat up to the shore, and run to her assistance. She saw him coming, slipping and jumping over that miry ground and then—

His arms closed around her and she felt herself dragged up and out and actually carried to the bank. Oh, how

humiliating to have such muddy feet at such a moment! "I want to get my slippers off," she gasped. "Please put me down! Oh, wasn't that an awful bird with the long legs?"

The young man gave one significant glance at her own dangling extremities. "Are you the professor of English Literature?" he asked, wickedly. And then, choking with love and laughter, he gathered her tight in his arms and kissed her flaming cheeks and chin and lips.

Miriam gasped at the sudden onset and struggled to freedom. And none too soon. The crackling of underbrush gave warning. Out of the shelter of the alders, on the opposite side of the stream, appeared the substantial figure of Lauchy MacDonald, ready to render first aid to the wounded. If ever he was avenged for his son's defeat with the caber, at the hands of Hugh, it was now!

Aunt Hannah was properly scandalised at her niece's unsightly appearance when she finally presented herself at the house. And all the time she helped her change into fresh attire, she was expostulating and rebuking and exclaiming at the danger so narrowly averted. But, however much Miriam tried to realise the extent of her foolhardiness, back there would come, on a soft current of joy, the remembrance of that one moment, just before Lauchy, blind, blundering Lauchy, had put in an appearance and spoiled things so completely.

She thought she would never be able to face Hugh Stewart again, and yet she thought the time would drag until she did. She stood in her fresh, white frock, in front of her little mirror, just before supper, and looked at her reflection with a new interest. Clear eyes, calm brow, pleasant lines and curves looked back at her. She could not recognise the stamp of resolution, the impress of fine thoughts, that were engraved upon her face.

"Must have been Hughie Stewart I saw, driving down to the Outlet," her uncle said, winking at his sister as he passed the bread at supper. "He's off to call on those pretty girls from West Lake, I suppose," and he smiled slyly at the sudden access of colour in his niece's face.

If Hugh had gone to the Outlet, the cove was free. This was Miriam's thought. The cove was always her haven. And once the supper things were cleared away she slipped on her scarlet jacket and made her way quietly down the carriage-drive and on by the road to the shore. The sky was pale with sunset's after-glow. The long stretch of white sand was quite deserted. The winds were all asleep. The light waves lisped peace.

She clasped her hands behind, and with face turned to the lake, wide and free in the evening light, she steeped her soul in the nameless glory of water and air and sky. She had meant to feast here, all alone, on the precious secret, but now she could not bear to unlock that far corner of her heart where it was guarded, but hid it even from herself, content to breathe and feel the loveliness about her.

And so she did not hear him coming, with quick impetuous strides, his footsteps silent on the smooth sand. She started impulsively as his warm fingers closed around her hands, loosely clasped behind. She drew them swiftly away. Hugh walked past and beyond her, far out on that point of land round whose rocky base wild geese honk and flutter, and sea-gulls swoop, screaming and circling in white fury.

She followed at her own quiet pace and found a nook in the shelter of the cove. Sitting there she watched him standing out alone, silhouetted against the evening sky. Her heart was in mad tumult. She knew he would come back to her as surely as those wild birds to their sandy shelter. But what he would say or what she would

answer her mind could not frame. Only she knew that she wanted him. Her heart said, "Oh, Hugh, come. I need you!"

And suddenly he turned and walked straight towards her. A white cloud of sea-gulls lifted as he passed.

He stood in front of her as she sat in the hollow, and looked down, contritely.

"Will you forgive me, Miriam?"

"For what, Hugh?" She was playing with the sand, sifting it through her fingers."

"For the advantage I took of you, this morning by the brook." His words came with difficulty, but he still looked at her.

Miriam's head drooped, and she dug away at the sand as though she had to make a tunnel to New Zealand. It was growing dusk. The evening star shone out in the dark blue sky.

"You shouldn't have done it," she said.

He dropped down swiftly beside her. She would not turn her head, although she felt him there, so near her.

"But if a man couldn't help himself," he ventured. It was plain by the flush of his face and the quick light of his eyes, that the inclination was strong on him again. Miriam detected it in the tremor of his voice. She answered hurriedly, as though to ward him off—"Why, then, I suppose he would have to be forgiven."

The sheltering rock betrays no secrets. The wide beach is forsaken. Evening drops her sable curtains. The stars shine faintly as though with averted gaze. Far out on the bosom of the lake sounds the clear, weird call of the loon, strangely softened but jubilant. Love has spoken and all Nature is drowsy with harmony.

THE END